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ABSTRACT

The five chapters of this monograph review the literature and propose best practices for the successful transition of youth with disabilities from school to adult life in the community. The opening chapter, "Transition from School to Integrated Communities" (Janis Chadsey-Rusch and others), offers a review of the research on outcomes attained by special education youth, noting that current outcomes are fairly negative and identifying factors associated with positive outcomes. In the second chapter, "Best Practices in Transition: Substantiated or Implied," Paula D. Kohler reviews 49 studies and supports such practices as vocational training, parent involvement, and interagency collaboration. The next chapter, "An Analysis of Exemplary Transition Programs: How and Why Are They Selected?" by Kohler and others, focuses on the methodology used to identify best practices and exemplary programs. Frequently cited variables include supported employment services, community-based instruction, and vocational assessment practices. In "Educational Reform and Special Education: Foundations for a National Research Agenda Focused upon Secondary Education," John M. Johnson and Frank R. Rusch discuss the relationship between the educational reform movement and special education and encourage a cooperatively focused research agenda. Finally, in "Secondary Special Education and Transition Services: Identification of Issues and Recommendations for Future Research and Demonstration," Johnson and Rusch emphasize the following areas: dropout prevention, parent involvement, transition planning, curriculum and instruction, best practices, transition policy, and future research and demonstration activities. Abstracts and references are provided for each chapter. (DB)

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Transition from School to Adult Life: Foundations, Best Practices, and Research Directions

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John R. Johnson and Frank R. Rusch

INTRODUCTION

The opening chapter, "Transition from School to Integrated Communities," in many ways sets the stage for the remainder of this monograph, which goes on to explore more closely the issues raised by Chadsey-Rusch, Rusch, and O'Reilly. Using Halpern's recommended outcomes—employment, residential, and social and interpersonal relations—as their framework, the authors present their findings of a review of the research on outcomes attained by special education youths after they leave school. Unfortunately, the picture is bleak; few youths live independently, many are not well integrated into their communities, and some appear to be lonely.

More encouraging is the second part of the chapter, which focuses on factors found to be positively associated with the desired outcomes, such as paid work, family/friend networks and involvement, interagency cooperation, and social skills training. Interestingly, great commonality was found across the three outcome areas studied in terms of variables associated with improved outcomes. The authors temper these optimistic findings by cautioning that research is still needed to identify those variables that predict successful transitioning from school to community life.

To determine which "best practices" have been identified or supported in the literature as being associated with positive student outcomes, Kohler examined 49 documents. In over 50% of the studies reviewed, three practices emerged: vocational training, parent involvement, and interagency collaboration and service delivery. Moreover, at least one third of the literature supported social skills training, paid work experience, and individual transition plans.

The author ends by warning that although we must develop programs that are built upon a solid foundation, in the short-term, we cannot wait for empirical evidence of effectiveness to emerge in order to begin program development.

In the third article, "An Analysis of Exemplary Transition Programs: How and Why Are They Selected?," Kohler et al. continue the discussion of exemplary programs, shifting the

focus to the methodology used to identify best practices and exemplary programs and to determine what practices are consistently identified as effective. Similar to Kohler, these authors found the following variables to be the most frequently cited: vocational assessment practices, supported employment services, parent involvement, community-based instruction, and coordinated service provision. Kohler et al. point out that it is reassuring to note that specific criteria—often based on outcome or evaluation data, rather than arbitrary or political motives—have been applied in the selection of exemplary transition programs.

In "Education Reform and Special Education: Foundations for a National Research Agenda Focused upon Secondary Education," Johnson and Rusch go beyond traditional transition issues to discuss the relationship between the educational reform movement and special education. Believing that successful implementation of IDEA depends on the "health" of the general public school system, the authors reviewed the literature on educational reform to determine its impact on young people with disabilities.

Based on their findings, they recommend that special educators, instead of criticizing the reform movement, support it by pushing for full inclusion and a merger of regular and special education. The authors conclude by making a strong case for developing a cooperatively focused research agenda predicated on eliminating any distinction between regular and special education.

Finally, in "Secondary Special Education and Transition Services: Identification of Issues and Recommendations for Future Research and Demonstration," Johnson and Rusch bring the monograph to a close with a set of recommendations for future research and demonstration activities. Consistent with the tenor of the previous chapters, the following emerged as areas of concern: drop-out prevention, parent involvement, transition planning, curriculum and instruction, best practices, transition policy, and future research and demonstration activities. Echoing previous chapters, the authors emphasize that while progress has been made in the provision of transition services to students with disabilities,

serious issues remain unresolved. Finally, they warn that if transition planning and implementation efforts are to be successful, issues related to the condition of schools in general must also be addressed.

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January, 1993

Chapter 1

Transition from School to Integrated Communities

Janis Chadsey-Rusch

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RUNNING HEAD: Transition to Integrated Communities

Remedial and Special Education (1991), 12 (6), 23-33.

Abstract

Research on employment, residential, and social outcomes of youth transitioning from school to adulthood is reviewed. Results of follow-up studies show that only a few youths with disabilities are employed after leaving school. Further, these young adults are even less integrated into employment, independent living, and community activities as they age. The variables that may enhance selected community integration outcomes are also discussed. Variables that may enhance transition efforts include work experience in the community, good interpersonal skills, family involvement, and support from others. Finally, future directions for special education are discussed.

Transition from School to Integrated Communities

The push for accountability in education, coupled with the emphasis on facilitating transition from high school to adulthood (Rusch & Phelps, 1987; Will, 1984), has caused policymakers, parents, and educators form a variety of fields (i.e., special and vocational education and rehabilitation) to rethink educational goals and how best to measure them. This thinking process has been fueled further by a number of disturbing studies revealing that many young adults with disabilities are (a) not employed, (b) not living on their own, (c) not integrated into their communities, or (d) not very satisfied with their lives (Edgar, Levine, & Maddox, 1986; Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Kregel, Wehman, & Seyfarth, 1985; Mithaug, Horiuchi, & Fanning, 1985; Wagner, 1989; Wehman, Kregel, & Seyfarth, 1985; Zigmond & Thornton, 1985). As a result, educators are increasingly focusing their attention on the outcomes that should be associated with education, and on interventions that will maximize schools' effectiveness (DeStefano & Wagner, 1990).

The public school system (most notably special education) is not totally responsible for the success, or lack of success, of its school leavers. Instead, successful transition from school to adulthood is the responsibility of many, including educators, administrators, parents, the person with a disability, adult service agencies, and employers (Berkell & Brown, 1989; Chadsey-Rusch, 1988; Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood, & Barcus, 1988). Yet as youth exit the public schools, society will pass most of the blame onto the educational system. Consequently, student outcome data must be collected, evaluated, and utilized to document educational experiences that result in desirable postschool outcomes.

Society has not clearly articulated the desired outcomes that should be obtained by high school graduates. In special education, however, student outcomes are continuing to be identified by governmental agencies and researchers due to the reporting requirements of P.L. 99-457 and federally funded student follow-up studies (e.g., Wagner, 1989). For example, in a recent discussion of outcome assessment in special education, DeStefano and

Wagner (1990) identified the common outcomes utilized to evaluate students while attending high schools (e.g., grades, attendance, test scores) and youths after leaving school (e.g., employment, earnings, residential status). DeStefano and Wagner (1990) acknowledged that the outcomes chosen for evaluation reflect the values of schools, programs, and government agencies.

In the early 1980s, when a federal emphasis was placed on facilitating transition form school to work, two outcome models were proposed by Will (1984) and Halpern (1985). In Will's (1984) model, the targeted outcome was employment, although other aspects of adult roles also were considered important (e.g., social interactions, leisure activities). Halpern's model (1985) suggested that the desired outcome of transition services should be community adjustment, which consisted of three distinct components: employment, residential adjustment, and the establishment of desirable social and interpersonal networks. Halpern (1989) further proposed that community adjustment would be enhanced by developing personal factors such as one's self-esteem and empowering the individual to select his or her own goals and make decisions. Will (1984) and Halpern's (1985) models introduced new, nontraditional outcomes with which to evaluate education. In essence, they proposed that schools should not be responsible just for producing literate Americans, but also for producing an independent, productive, and skilled work force (DeStefano & Wagner, 1990).

Unfortunately, as many special education follow-up studies have suggested (e.g., Edgar et al., 1986; Mithaug et al., 1985; Wagner, 1989), most youths achieve only a few of the outcomes recommended by Will (1984), Halpern (1985), and others as being critical. Even within general education, non-college-bound youth (approximately 20 million) are failing to attain desirable levels of self-dependency as a result of employment (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988). The educational system has become so preoccupied with college-bound youth that it has forgotten about those students who are not college bound (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988). The results reported from numerous sources indicate that the

potential of our young adults is being wasted, and that changes in our educational infrastructure are long past due.

In this article we use Halpern's (1985) recommended outcomes (i.e., employment, residential, and social and personal relations) as the overarching framework to review research related to outcomes that youth in special education are reportedly attaining after they leave school. Literature identifying variables that may impact on those outcomes also is presented. Finally, unresolved issues and areas for future research are considered.

Current Transition Outcomes

Employment

Earning a wage, interacting with co-workers, and career advancement (i.e, making more money, being promoted within an organizational structure, assuming more responsibility) are among the many expectations society holds for youth after they graduate from high school. Today, however, many of America's youth are faced with uncertain employment, low wages, and changing work-force demands. The William T. Grant Foundation (1988) recently reported that non-college-bound teenagers' unemployment among African-American teenagers as high as 32.4%. The Foundation also reported that the real median incomes of families headed by 20- to 24-year-old youths dropped 27% from 1973 to 1986; further, these same youths face fewer opportunities for a job with a future (i.e., a job that promotes personal growth).

Tragically, employment outcomes among youths with disabilities (see Note) is worse than for youths without disabilities. Youths with disabilities reportedly have only a 35% chance of obtaining full-time employment after leaving school, and their chances for employment decrease over time (Mithaug, Martin, Agran, & Rusch, 1988). For example, Mithaug et al. (1985) found that only 32% of special education students who graduated from Colorado schools were employed full-time. Similarly, Hasazi et al. (1985) reported that less than half of all youth with disabilities (46%) were competitively employed 2 years after

leaving high school. Although the employment rates for youth with disabilities leaving school vary across states, it is apparent that few realize the goal of full-time employment.

Even if youths are employed, many are underemployed. Examining their wages is probably one of the best ways to understand the extent of underemployment among persons with disabilities. Mithaug et al. (1985) reported that 57% of their sample of 234 students who graduated form special education programs in 1978 and 1979 earned less that $4.00 per hour. Similarly, Fardig, Algozzine, Schwartz, Hensel, and Westling (1985) found that only 32% of their sample earned minimum wage, and the remainder earned less. Finally, Wehman et al. (1985) noted that nearly 7% of youths who were employed after departing high school were earning minimum wage or less.

After summarizing the results of seven follow-up studies, Mithaug et al. (1988) concluded that "the future for secondary students in special education is not very bright. It is clouded with increased probabilities for dropping out of school, unemployment or underemployment, and low earnings" (p. 12). Even for those individuals who obtain employment, career-advancement opportunities appear to be minimal.

Residential

When most youths leave school, it is expected that their integration into their local communities includes moving out from under their parents' roof and adjusting to a new residence. Implicitly, one of society's expectations for youths exiting high schools is that they live as independently as possible. Not all follow-up studies of exiting youths have measured residential adjustment; when it has been measured, living independently has generally been defined as living on one's own or with a spouse or roommate.

In Vermont Hasazi, Gordon, Roe, Hull, Finck, and Salembier (1985) reported on the residential status of youths labeled educable (EMR) or trainable mentally retarded (TMR). Of the 242 youths who exited high school between 1981 and 1983, 82% still lived with their parents, 11% lived independently, and 7% lived in facilities operated by community mental health agencies. More females (18%) than males (6%) lived independently, probably due to

marital status. Further, more youths labeled as TMR lived in agency facilities (24%) than those youths labeled EMR (5%).

Kregel et al. (1985) studied the community integration status of 300 young adults with mild, moderate, and severe mental retardation who had left the Virginia public schools between 1979 and 1983. Data indicated that 86.4% were living at home with their natural families and only 7.8% were living independently. However, though most of the sample were living at home with their families, 90% were judged by their parents to be independent in basic self-care tasks.

Benz and Halpern (1987) conducted a statewide follow-up survey of youths with mild disabilities who had left schools in Oregon 1 year prior to 1982-83. Although teachers did not know the residential status of 60% of their former students, they reported that of the 1,430 students considered (who left school with or without graduating), 26% were living at home and only 7% were living independently. Benz and Halpern (1987) also asked parents what they expected their child to be doing immediately after leaving school and 10 years later. Although 25% of the parents had no idea where their child would be living, 65% expected their child to be living independently 10 years after leaving high school.

Tilson and Neubert (1988) found similar results when they surveyed parents who had children enrolled in a job training and tryout program that provided time-limited, postsecondary transition services to youths with mild disabilities. All of the young adults (18 to 29) in this survey were living at home with their parents. When parents were asked where they thought their son or daughter would be living 5 years later, 78% expected their children to live away from home, either independently (64%) or in a residential group home (24%).

In follow-up studies involving youths with behavior disorders (Edgar & Levine, 1986; Neel, Meadows, Levine, & Edgar, 1988; Sitlington, Frank, & Carson, 1990), about half of the respondents were living at home 1 year after leaving school. This number was actually lower than for youths without disabilities, because 66% of the nondisabled sample were still

living with a relative 1 year after graduating from school (Neel et al., 1988). Over time, rather than living more independently, youths with behavior disorders tended to live less independently (from 30% to 10% 24 months after exiting school) (Edgar & Levine, 1986).

Data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (Wagner, 1989) indicate that 82% of youths were living at home with their parents 1 year after leaving secondary school; in comparison, 69% were living at home 1 to 2 years after leaving school. Wagner (1989) reported that the rate at which youths with disabilities were living at home was higher than the rates reported for youths without disabilities. As in other follow-up studies, the parents responding in Wagner's study expected their children to eventually live away from home.

These data indicate that most special education youths live at home with their parents or another relative 1 or 2 years after leaving school. As Halpern (1989) pointed out, these figures are not vastly different for youths without disabilities. However, when data are collected for longer periods of time, special education youths live less independently than their nondisabled counterparts. Several of these studies also revealed that some parents had not thought seriously about where their children would be living after school, were not aware of their options, or did not know how to answer questions of this type. Of the parents responding to long-term expectations, most expected that their children would be living out of their homes 5 to 10 years after they left school.

Social and Interpersonal Relationships

The third outcome by which transition efforts should be judged is whether youths experience satisfying social and interpersonal relationships once they leave school (Halpern, 1985). This dimension of community adjustment, which has typically received little attention, has recently experienced a surge of interest due to several factors. First, friendships and interactions with others are among the most valued aspects of the life of a person with disabilities (Gollay, Wyngaarden, Freedman, & Kurtz, 1978; Landesman-Dwyer & Berkson, 1984; O'Connor, 1983). Second, social interactions contribute to the formation of friendships, social support, and job satisfaction (House, 1981; Pogrebin, 1987). Finally, the

display of inappropriate social behaviors has been associated with placement in more restrictive residential settings (Haney, 1988) and job firings (Brickey, Campbell, & Browning, 1985; Greenspan & Shoultz, 1981; Hanley-Maxwell, Rusch, Chadsey-Rusch, & Renzaglia, 1986).

Because few early transition follow-up studies (e.g., Hasazi et al., 1985; Mithaug et al., 1985) have measured social and interpersonal relationships, limited information is available. Wagner (1989), however, assessed the social integration of youths still in high schools and those who had been out of school for 1 or 2 years. For youths still in school, Wagner found that about one-third were reported by their parents as getting together with their friends more than five times per week; only 10% of those youths saw their friends less than once per week. Nearly half of the youths (43%) belonged to a school or community group, with the majority joining sporting teams. Overall, youths with disabilities belonged to fewer groups than youths without disabilities; and youths with mental retardation, emotional disturbance, and health impairments joined fewer groups than youths with speech, visual, or hearing impairments. After youths leave high school, the rate of affiliation does appear to drop off significantly (Wagner, 1989). For example, for youths out of school less than 1 year, only 29% belonged to school or community groups, compared to 19% for youth out of school for 1 or 2 years.

Wagner (1989) examined marital status and arrest reports as possible indicators of social integration. With respect to marital status, she found that youths with disabilities were less likely to be married than nondisabled youths without disabilities. Tragically, criminal activity appears to increase among youths with disabilities the longer they are out of school. Wagner reported that 9% of the youths in her study were arrested while in school, compared to 21% being arrested when out of school 1 or 2 years.

Besides the information from Wagner (1989), little other information is available regarding social and interpersonal relationships of youths in transition. Several investigators, however, have assessed the social relationships and quality of life of adults

with disabilities living in integrated communities (e.g., Birenbaum & Re, 1979; Edgerton, 1967; Edgerton & Bercovici, 1976; Gollay et al., 1978; Halpern, Close, & Nelson, 1986; Heal & Chadsey-Rusch, 1985; Schalock, Harper, & Carver, 1981). In one of the most recent of these studies, Halpern et al. (1986) interviewed adults with mental retardation who were living in semi-independent living programs in four western states. (The sample slightly overrepresented females and people 26 years of age or older.) The results form this study indicate that nearly all of the adults had a "best friend," yet almost half of the group reported that they were lonely and wished they had more time to spend with their friends. Nearly half of the group had a benefactor—a person who helped them without pay on an ongoing basis. Generally, benefactors included family members or program staff. Very few of the interviewees were married, but many of them had a girlfriend or boyfriend.

In terms of recreational activities, Halpern et al. (1986) reported that individuals participated in leisure activities at similar levels reported by individuals without disabilities. For example, they watched television, listened to music, took walks or bicycle rides, read, and went out to eat. The majority of the sample (86%) were satisfied with their leisure pursuits. Although this group was living in the community, very few of them (only one-third) spent time with non-disabled persons. This lack of integration as believed to be due to 37% of the group working in sheltered workshops, nearly half of the individuals living with other persons with disabilities, and many living in neighborhoods with a high concentration of people with disabilities.

Summary

The outcomes experienced by youths with disabilities for employment, residential status, and social and interpersonal relationships are disappointing. Although rates vary from state to state, most youths with disabilities are either not employed or underemployed. Few youths live independently, many are not well integrated into their communities, and some appear to be lonely. Overall, youths with disabilities face a very uncertain future that holds little promise of improving as they age.

Although these results appear bleak, there is research available that suggests certain variables are associated with improved outcomes for youths with disabilities. Those variables that seem to enhance transition efforts are discussed in the next section.

Improving Transition Outcomes

Employment

In addition to identifying the extent to which students with disabilities fail to achieve selected outcomes associated with employment, recent follow-up studies and selected research have identified certain factors that are positively associated with employment. For example, Hasazi et al. (1985) indicated that over one-half of the special education students who left school over a 5-year period found jobs as a result of a reported self-family-friend network. Also, employment appeared to be related to vocational training experiences, including part-time or summer work. Similarly, Wehman et al. (1985) reported that students who were employed after high school never used a job placement service. Instead, they found jobs through family members or friends.

Schalock and his colleagues (Schalock & Harper, 1978; Schalock & Lilley, 1986; Schalock et al., 1986) have included training and family-related involvement as predictors of employment. These authors have found that former students with moderate to high family involvement were more successful on the outcome variables related to employment than similar students with little or no family involvement. More semester hours in school (versus less or none) also were predictive of successful employment. Wagner (1989) also found that high school graduates, by participating more often in further education and training, increased the probability of their employment.

Heal, Gonzalez, Rusch, Copher, and DeStefano (1990) compared 54 matched pairs of young adults with mental retardation in terms of successful versus unsuccessful employment. To be included each member had to be employed for 10 or more hours per week for at least 6 months. Additionally, each member had to have earned at least minimum wage. Heal et al. (1990) found that support provided by parents, employers, and

employment placement agencies was significantly greater for successful versus unsuccessful employees. Also, job match was associated more often with successful rather than unsuccessful cases.

In addition to these findings, Heal et al. (1990) found that several individual characteristics were related to success, including work quality, attitude, social skills, and the absence of asocial skills (e.g., verbal aggression, noncompliance, failure to come to work). The importance of work-related and social skills is consistent with findings reported by Hanley-Maxwell et al. (1986). Hanley-Maxwell et al. examined factors contributing to job terminations among 51 persons with disabilities. Results indicated that most job terminations were due to social reasons. Moreover, when production problems were reported (e.g., not getting the job done), the presence of social problems was associated with a greater likelihood of job terminations.

Heal and Rusch (1990) reported on the postsecondary employment of 1,358 individuals involved in the National Longitudinal Transition Study (Wagner, 1989) who had left high school between 1985 and 1987. Employment was defined as having had a job during the 12 months before the interview in 1987. A total of 74 predictor variables, consisting of student characteristics, school program characteristics, and parent characteristics, were ordered in 15 blocks. This study revealed that student maladaptive behavior, student competence, and a community-focused curriculum contributed significantly to postschool employment.

In a study of the employment of 58 young adults with mental illness, Cook, Roussel, and Skiba (1987) found that prior employment history was positively related to obtaining a job after enrollment in a model program. In addition, age and gender were significantly related to length of time before actual employment. Interestingly, older individuals and men appeared more successful than younger individuals and women.

Residential

Few studies have addressed critical variables that enhance residential adjustment. In fact, only two studies have addressed the residential adjustment of youths leaving schools.

Black, Molaison, and Smull (1990) investigated the service needs of families caring for young adults with mental retardation (ages 20 to 24 years) with an emphasis on identifying those predictor variables that are associated with family requests for community services in Maryland. Results of a multiple-regression analysis revealed that requests for community living were due more to family circumstances, particularly financial concerns, than to the individual characteristics of young adults or their participation in regular daytime activities. Most families, however, seemed to recognize the need for services other than residential alternatives and made requests for services that represented normalizing activities that promoted independence for their children (e.g., social or recreation activities).

Utilizing the National Longitudinal Transition Study (Wagner, 1989) sample, Heal, Jeng, Rusch, and DeStefano (1990) examined youths' residential restrictiveness 2 years after leaving high school. A regression analysis was used to determine which of 32 student, school program, and family characteristics best predicted residential restrictiveness. Results indicated that individual characteristics such as intelligence, living skills, and maladaptive behavior were better predictors of residential restrictiveness than were school characteristics, including training for community living and employment.

It is difficult to make recommendations regarding variables that will enhance residential adjustment on the basis of two studies. However, these two studies (i.e., Black et al., 1990; Heal, Jeng, Rusch, & DeStefano, 1990) can be considered within the framework of the literature regarding successful community residential placements for adults with developmental disabilities (e.g., Haney, 1988). The data from this literature are largely correlational in nature, yielding predictor variables that are associated with successful residential adjustment.

In her review, Haney (1988) analyzed this literature according to Rappaport's (1977) ecological model. Based on her review, Haney (1988) provided direction for change at each of four levels (these levels included individual, small group, organizational, and community). For example, at the individual level, she concluded that maladaptive

behavior was the best predictor of unsuccessful community residential placement. Conversely, positive relationships were found between placement success and appearance, vocational skill, personality, and social skills. At the group level, Haney (1988) noted that several variables were associated with residential success, including matching the individual with caregiver, peers, and family characteristics. In addition, environmental factors such as training, increased freedom to move about the community, responsibility, activities promoting social integration, age appropriateness, and some aspects of the environment (e.g., flexibility of control) were suggested as being positively associated with successful community placement.

At the organizational level, Haney (1988) reported that if individuals were living in facilities, smaller facilities were associated with greater autonomy and responsibility. Group homes were associated with greater adaptive skill improvement, but also more maladaptive behavior. Haney (1988) also suggested that administrative policies related to normalization, advocacy, and empowerment would decrease resident dependence on these service bureaucracies and promote independence.

Finally, research at the community level has indicated that increased services and improved social support may be positively associated with successful residential placement. Consequently, Haney (1988) recommended an increase in generic services, placement alternatives, increased funding for support services, financial incentives for placement in independent residential settings, long-term follow-up services, establishment of self-help groups, and encouragement of community acceptance.

Social and Interpersonal Relationships

Although a great deal of information is available regarding social skills training (e.g., Cartledge & Milburn, 1986; Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw, & Klein, 1980; Hollin & Trower, 1988), it is unclear whether teaching specific social skills will result in satisfying, long-term personal relationships. Also, it is unclear whether variables such as the number of times individuals see their friends (e.g., Wagner, 1989) represents the best measure of

interpersonal adjustment. A more valid measure may be to ask the individuals themselves to indicate whether they are satisfied with their social lives.

Although it is important to assess social satisfaction from the individual's perspective, interactions involve others (e.g., families, peers, coworkers, employers, neighbors) whose perceptions and actions are equally salient in determining adjustment. For example, we know that employers value certain social skills (e.g., Rusch, Schutz, & Agran, 1982; Salzberg, Agran, & Lignugaris/Kraft, 1986), that many of these social skills occur frequently in employment settings (e.g., Chadsey-Rusch & Gonzalez, 1988; Chadsey-Rusch, Gonzalez, Tines, & Johnson, 1989; Lignugaris/Kraft, Salzberg Rule, & Stowitschek, 1988), and that lack of these skills or inappropriate display of them may result in job terminations (e.g., Lagomarcino & Rusch, in press). Consequently, social skills that have been identified as important and valued in employment settings should be taught to youths lacking those skills.

Wagner (1989) indicated that youths who are poorly integrated socially tend to do less well in school and, ultimately, to drop out of school. Additionally, it appears that social integration affects transition in a positive manner. As a result, Wagner (1989) suggested that schools increase integration of youths by sponsoring a wide variety of curricular and extracurricular activities that appeal to all youths. Further, youths with disabilities should be encouraged to participate in these activities, and their participation should be monitored. The William T. Grant Foundation (1988) supported this notion, citing evidence that youths participating in school extracurricular and community-based youth activities led to membership as adults in voluntary organizations and to political activity. For youths with more serious social problems in school, Wagner (1989) recommended that they receive support services and intervention programs that directly ameliorate the behaviors leading to their problems.

Summary

Although the results of most follow-up studies are not promising, a number of studies have documented variables that appear to be associated with improved outcomes. In the area of employment, it appears that youth are more likely to be employed if friends and family help them find a job, if there is a good match made between their abilities and their job, and if they have taken vocational courses and have had actual job experiences in the community. In addition, successful employment seems to be influenced by support from others. Specifically, more family involvement and support from employers and placement agencies increase the likelihood of employment. Finally, individual characteristics that relate to successful employment include the absence of asocial behavior, the presence of good social skills, and an appropriate work attitude.

Interestingly, successful residential adjustment also seems to be associated with many of the same variables as successful employment. For example, individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience residential adjustment if they possess good social skills, daily living skills, and recreation and leisure skills. In addition, if they are involved in their community and have access to support (whether personal or financial), they are more likely to experience residential success.

Similar variables also were found to be associated with satisfying personal and social relationships, although the data were not as clear-cut in this area. For example, community involvement, including involvement in extracurricular activities in schools and groups outside of school, was found to be associated with more frequent contact with others.

Knowledge of the variables associated with more positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities is helpful and encouraging. However, many issues remain unresolved, and future directions are needed to improve the postschool outcomes of youths with disabilities. These issues and directions are explored in the next and final section.

Unresolved Issues and Future Directions

Recent follow-up studies in special education have illuminated the postschool successes and failures of youths with disabilities. The majority of these studies, however, have been descriptive, rather than explanatory, and therefore we may be asking too much of our present data base to yield answers to questions about restructuring secondary special education school experiences (Blackorby & Edgar, 1992). Nevertheless, future research directions may be identified and suggestions based on our existing knowledge base can be made for directing special education services. Directions that special education may take are addressed first, followed by several suggested research agendas.

Special Education Directions

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; P.L. 101-476) makes it clear that transition services must be provided to all students with disabilities beginning no later than 16 years of age (and at age 14 for students with severe cognitive and/or multiple disabilities), and annually thereafter until the transition objectives are met. Transition services have been defined to mean a coordinated set of activities between schools and other agencies (when appropriate) that are designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to integrated employment, postsecondary education, vocational training, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Although local education agencies will not be held liable for the failure of another agency to provide transition services, it is expected that if the transition objectives are not met, then the local education agency will need to reconvene the IEP team to specify alternative methods for meeting the transition objectives (P.L. 101-476).

The intent of this new legislation makes it imperative that secondary special education make some changes rather quickly. Schools must become familiar with postschool services so that they can establish linkages with agencies, and they must identify ways they can prepare students to take advantage of these services (P.L. 101-476). Schools probably will need to make their greatest change with students with mild disabilities who wish to be

employed rather than attain additional postsecondary training. Transition outcomes for students with severe disabilities appear to be more agreed upon within our educational communities (e.g., Berkell, 1992; Hutchins & Renzaglia, 1990; Rusch, 1990). Employment-related experiences have been recommended and are being implemented by increasing numbers of local education agencies. Students with mild disabilities must begin to benefit from an educational curriculum that results in graduates obtaining marketable skills, a job, and access to generic community services. Students who plan to enter the work force after graduation will require a different set of experiences than college-bound youths.

Recently, Affleck, Edgar, Levine, and Kortering (1990) cited the need for a curriculum that teaches critical life skills, including finding a job, staying employed, taking care of one's personal needs, and getting along with others. Mithaug, Martin, and Agran (1987) and Mithaug et al. (1988) also have stressed the importance of teaching students to be adaptive and flexible. Acquisition of these skills, however, does not necessarily have to occur in the classroom. Hamilton (1986) proposed that secondary education in the United States consider restructuring schooling experiences to resemble those utilized in West Germany. If the West German educational system were adopted for students in secondary special education, the principal learning environment would be the work place and larger community; however, the school setting would not be abandoned altogether. Students would work within an apprenticeship-type system, attending high school classes on a limited, yet complementary basis. More traditional academic subjects (e.g., mathematics), as well as other subjects (e.g., social skills), would be introduced in relation to assigned apprenticeships in high schools. Educational experiences of this type would provide a clearer connection between what the students were learning in the classroom and their real worlds.

To make certain that youths are provided career advancement opportunities, Siegel (1988) proposed that youths have access to lifelong support. Because many youths with disabilities are underemployed, continuing support may be necessary to help these

individuals move up the career ladder. With support, individuals could seek help when a problem occurred at work, when they wanted to make a career change, or when they wanted to obtain further education (Siegel, 1988). Not unlike the supported employment model (cf. Rusch, 1990), this support would be available on a long-term basis, but would be less intense than the support that may be needed for individuals with severe disabilities.

Restructuring high school experiences will require the roles of secondary special education teachers to change. Although special educators might teach some traditional academic subjects in high school, these academic subjects would need to relate to students' apprenticeships and everyday community life. Teachers also would need to be knowledgeable about new academic areas, including economics, the business sector, and adult-service agencies, in order to forge transition linkages for their students. It also is likely that teachers would require good consultation skills so that they could advise businesses and agencies about effective teaching strategies and potential curricular modifications that might be needed in work and community environments to enhance successful transitions.

Within this restructuring there must be high expectations for students to succeed. Expecting students to master the dual roles of learner and worker (Hamilton, 1986) must be viewed as part of emerging reforms for excellence. With this experiential learning base, ongoing support, and transition linkages, it is possible that the youths of tomorrow will experience better outcomes than the youths of the past.

Research Perspective

Although a relationship exists between many of the suggestions made above and the variables that were associated with improved outcomes presented earlier in this article, our follow-up data base is modest and primarily descriptive. We still do not possess a clear understanding of the variables that will predict successful transition from school to community life. To understand this process more clearly, research is still needed.

Certainly, many questions and methodologies can be proposed, but it may be helpful to consider at least the following two research agendas.

First, Blackorby and Edgar (1992), although still advocating for traditional quantitative longitudinal follow-up studies, believe that utilizing qualitative research methodology will enable us to better understand the subtle, yet pervasive, variables that influence postschool status. Similar to Heal et al.'s (1990) study. Blackorby and Edgar (in press) proposed studying successful and unsuccessful special education graduates matched by disability level, gender, and economic status. Case study methodology would be used to identify experiential differences between successful and unsuccessful individuals. With qualitative methods, a theoretical model might evolve that could be used to study successful versus unsuccessful graduates (Yin, 1984). Subsequently, more traditional research designs could then be used to test the model components.

Hamilton (1980) proposed another course for a better understanding of program effectiveness. Hamilton cited Bronfenbrenner's (1979) "Dearborn's dictum": "If you want to understand something, try to change it." In this spirit, a research program might be designed (e.g., a restructured special education program) specifically for the purpose of evaluating it (Hamilton, 1980). In terms of measuring program effectiveness, Hamilton (1980) suggested that questions could focus on whether participants (e.g., students, parents, teachers) believed that they had been affected by the program, whether there was supporting evidence of participants' perceived changes (e.g., direct observation, standardized tests), whether there was evidence that suggested the program was responsible for the changes (e.g., a research design that incorporated a control and contrast group), and what components of the program were responsible for the changes (e.g., program activities, employer sponsorship, leadership type, purposes, duration of program participation).

Hamilton (1980) suggested that many programs are evaluated along the dimensions posed above; however, this is not necessarily true for transition-related programs. Further, few programs utilize a research design that incorporates a control group or groups receiving

alternative treatments. If different treatments were varied, or some aspect of one treatment was systematically varied, specific effects could be associated with particular types of programs or models. Interestingly, one could imagine that the results from a study similar to the one posed by Blackorby and Edgar (1992) could provide the variables to test in alternative treatments as proposed by Hamilton (1980).

General Summary

This article has reviewed outcomes that may be considered as forming the basis for school reform among secondary special education policymakers. Research conducted to follow up youths' transition into the local community indicates that society wants youths with disabilities to be employed, live as independently as possible, and be satisfied with their social and interpersonal networks. However, these outcomes are not being realized. In addition, it is not totally clear which variables impact directly on desired outcomes, although directions for change and research agendas were proposed.

Transition among youths with disabilities from school to adulthood is not a simple process; no one person, program, or agency can achieve these outcomes alone. Instead, as Haney (1988) suggested in her review of the indicators for residential success, an ecological perspective is needed. That is, positive transition outcomes should be viewed as the result of dynamic interactions between youths and their environments.

The current emphasis on transition is exciting and promising. It is hoped that, as further data are collected and utilized to make changes, outcomes for future generations of youths with disabilities will be brighter.

Note

The term *youths with disabilities* is used throughout this article unless authors of original articles indicated their samples as comprising specific disabilities. For example, Kregel et al.'s (1985) sample included youths with "mild, moderate, and severe mental retardation"; Hasazi, Gordon, Roe, Hull, Finck, and Salembier's (1985) sample included youths labeled "educable (EMR) or trainable mentally retarded (TMR)."

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Chapter 2

Best Practices in Transition: Substantiated or Implied?

Paula D. Kohler

RUNNING HEAD: Best Practices In Transition

Career Development for Exceptional Individuals (in press).

Abstract

During recent years, much research has focused on the concept of transition planning in efforts to improve the postschool outcomes of youths with disabilities. As a result, a number of "best practices" have evolved which appear to be related to the successful transition from school to work. The purpose of this study was to determine which of these practices have been identified or supported in the literature as having a positive impact on student outcomes. Three primary types of information emerged from the 49 documents identified for the study: (a) follow-up studies of students with disabilities, (b) pseudo- and quasi-experimental studies, and (c) theory-based or opinion articles. Evidence supporting the best practices was categorized as either being substantiated in the literature by results of a research study or implied as effective by the publication's author(s). Three practices--vocational training, parent involvement, and interagency collaboration and service delivery--were cited in over 50% of the literature reviewed. At least one third of the literature reviewed supported social skills training, paid work experience, and individual transition plans and planning as desirable practices. Recommendations to incorporate these practices into transition planning programs are presented. Research directions for linking practices and outcomes are suggested.

Best Practices in Transition: Substantiated or Implied?

Outcomes of youths with disabilities exiting public schools have not improved significantly during the last decade. Both historical and current data indicate that this population of individuals continues to drop out of school at a rate ranging from 30-80% (Edgar, 1987) and to experience low levels of full-time employment (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Wagner, 1989). Educators, researchers, and policymakers are focusing on the concept of transition from school to adult life in an attempt to identify factors that might improve the personal and vocational outlook for these young persons. Evidence suggests that transition planning and services are an effective way of improving the post-school outcomes of youths with disabilities (Rusch & Phelps, 1987).

Much of the research and literature in the field has focused on identifying essential components of transition planning. In line with this initiative, a number of "best practices" have evolved as part of efforts to plan and implement programs to facilitate transition from school for secondary students with disabilities. The most frequently cited "best practices" include interagency cooperation and collaboration, vocational assessment, vocational skills training, social skills training, career education curricula, paid work experience during high school, written transition plans, and parent or family involvement in the transition process (Foss, 1990).

The purpose of this study was to determine which transition practices have been identified or supported in the literature as having a positive impact on student outcomes. This article presents a review and analysis of literature concerning these "best practices." Conclusions are developed, including a synopsis of the most frequently cited practices. Finally, suggestions for additional research are offered.

Method of Review

Selection of Documents

To locate empirical research data for the study, several computer searches of the ERIC database were conducted. Such descriptors as transition, best practices, success, employment, empirical, disabilities, education, vocational rehabilitation, and transitional programs were utilized in a variety of combinations for the searches. In general, the searches focused on materials published from 1985 to 1991.

As documents emerged from the searches and the review process had begun, it became apparent that empirically-supported evidence pertaining to the practices was scarce, but that numerous documents about transition and transition practices were available. Thus, the focus of the study was changed to a review of transition-related literature, which included various types of documents. Three primary types of documents emerged with respect to transition: (a) follow-up studies of students with disabilities; (b) pseudo- and quasi-experimental studies; and (c) theory-based or opinion articles.

The search for documents was not limited to particular journals, but spanned a variety of journals and reports. Finally, 60 candidate documents were identified and screened according to the following criteria:

1. The focus of the document pertained to transition-related outcomes or practices.
2. The focus of the document pertained to youths with disabilities.
3. Within the document, the author(s) presented evidence and/or recommendation(s) pertaining to a transition-related practice or outcome.

Thus candidate documents were excluded from the review if they failed to meet any one of the criteria. Finally, 49 documents were included in the review; these documents represented 46 studies, as some authors published multiple manuscripts representing various segments of a study.

Coding of Evidence

While empirical support for the practices was not abundant in the literature, recommendations pertaining to the practices were numerous. Thus to differentiate between the nature of support, the evidence supporting the practices was categorized into two areas: (a) practices that were substantiated or supported in the literature by results of a study and (b) practices that were implied as desirable or effective by the publication's author(s). As documents were reviewed, the data or discussion about a particular practice or practices were screened as described below.

Substantiated by study results. Where there was a supporting link between results or outcomes and a practice, the practice was coded as "substantiated" for that particular document. For example, in their study of 50 successfully employed persons with disabilities, Hudson, Schwartz, Sealander, Campbell, and Hensel (1988) reported that 70% of their sample came to their present job with high school work experience and that 90% perceived family support as a personal resource for successful transition. In the Vermont study, Hasazi et al. (1985) found that of those students who held part-time outside jobs during high school, 70% were employed compared to 41% who did not hold such jobs. Thus, paid work experience was coded "substantiated" for both documents, and parent involvement was coded "substantiated" for the Hudson et al. (1988) document.

Implied by authors. Frequently the supporting link between evidence or data and a practice was not specific, yet the author(s) offered suggestions or implications pertaining to the application of a practice for program development. In such cases, the practice was coded "implied" for that document. For example, based on the experiences reported by youths in their sample, Shalock et al. (1986) concluded that individual transition plans would help minimize problems associated with a lack of assistance, transportation, or short term training. Hence, the practice "individual plans/planning" was coded "implied" for this document. Based on interviews with parents, Benz and Halpern (1987) and Tilson and

Neubert (1988) identified a need for greater parental involvement and recommended this practice. Thus "parent involvement" was coded "implied" for these documents.

Tables for each category of document were developed to facilitate recording which transition-related practices were substantiated or implied as being effective. A review of the literature in the three categories follows.

A Review of the Literature

Follow-Up Studies

Eighteen follow-up documents were identified and reviewed, representing 17 studies. The majority of these studies, which ranged in scope from local, one-district samples to statewide populations, were one-time attempts to describe the post-school status of youths with disabilities within the target area. A variety of methods were utilized to obtain data, including personal interviews with students or parents, as well as telephone and mail interviews. Some studies (e.g., Hasazi et al., 1985; Mithaug, Horiuchi, & Fanning, 1985) were designed to identify and detect the strength of correlation between particular educational experiences or skills and student outcomes. For example, Hasazi et al. (1985) conducted a follow-up analysis of all students in Vermont served by special education who exited school between 1979 and 1983. Similarly, Mithaug et al. (1985) carried out a statewide follow-up survey in Colorado of students completing special education services in 1978 and 1979. Follow-up studies of this nature, which collected data on both educational programming experiences and employment status, offer the only empirical-type data supporting best practices in transition within this category of the literature.

Vocational training and parent involvement were cited in more follow-up studies (53% and 47%, respectively) than any of the other practices (see Table 1). Specifically, vocational training was substantiated as effective in three studies and implied as a best practice in six others; parent involvement was substantiated in one study and implied in seven. Paid work experience in high school, although implied in only one study, was substantiated in three studies as correlating with post-school employment. Interagency collaboration and

service delivery, individual plans and planning, and social skills training were cited as key elements in transition in four studies; the remainder of the practices were substantiated or implied in two or less studies.

Insert Table 1 about here

Theory-Based or Opinion Literature

Eleven theory-based or opinion articles also were reviewed. This literature consisted of suggestions for best practices in transition or models for transition planning. For example, Will (1984) authored a paper outlining the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services' (OSERS) initiative for funding transition-related projects, and in so doing introduced the first formal model of transition from school to work. Thus, the description of funding priorities contained several implications concerning potentially effective transition practices. Other researchers (e.g., Halpern, 1985; Wehman, Kregel, & Barcus, 1985) presented their own models, each including elements thought to be necessary for successful transition from school to community. In most cases, findings from follow-up and/or pseudo- or quasi-experimental studies provided the rationale for opinions and suggested models.

More variables were cited as desirable practices, and with greater frequency, in the theory-based and opinion literature than in the follow-up studies (see Table 2). As in the latter, interagency collaboration and service delivery, vocational training, and parent involvement were cited the greatest number of times as desirable elements of transition programming. Interagency collaboration and service delivery was mentioned in every article, the other two variables in nine of eleven documents. Variables implied as effective in over 50% of the theory-based or opinion literature included interdisciplinary transition teams; individual transition plans and planning; employer input; identification of vocational, residential and social outcomes; vocational assessment; paid work experience;

community-based instruction; community-referenced curricula; and integration, least restrictive environment, and mainstreaming.

Insert Table 2 about here

Pseudo- or Quasi-Experimental Studies

Twenty pseudo- or quasi-experimental documents (representing 18 studies) were reviewed for evidence in support of best practices. These studies illustrated a variety of experimental designs, some very rigorous, others less so. For instance, Rusch and DeStefano (1989) analyzed over 200 model program applications from around the country, identifying an emergent pattern of characteristics associated with effective transition programming. In their effort to identify effective transition strategies, Hudson et al. (1988) conducted an in-depth study in Florida of 50 successfully employed individuals with disabilities. Roessler, Brolin, and Johnson (1990) followed up graduates in Arkansas, Minnesota, and California who had participated in a specific educational program. These authors analyzed responses from teachers, employers, parents, and students to identify effective programming elements. Because of the experimental nature of these studies, more elements appear to be substantiated by the results than in the other categories of literature. Again, however, evidence of effectiveness is primarily a result of implication by the author(s) rather than substantiation by data analysis.

Vocational training, social skills training, interagency collaboration and service delivery, parent involvement, employability skills training, and paid work experience emerged as the most frequently supported variables, ranging from 37% to 53%, in the pseudo- or quasi-experimental studies (see Table 3). With the exception of interagency collaboration and service delivery, all these practices were substantiated by results in at least two studies. Integration, least restrictive environment, and mainstreaming practices, although not implied in a large number of cases, were substantiated by results in two studies.

Insert Table 3 about here

Conclusions

In this review of literature, three practices—vocational training, parent involvement, and interagency collaboration and service delivery—were cited in over 50% of the documents analyzed (see Table 4). Further, at least one third of the literature supported social skills training, paid work experience, and individual transition plans and planning as best practices. Employability skills training and integration, least restrictive environment, and mainstreaming, although not implied as effective in a large number of studies, were substantiated by results in two studies each. Although no element was substantiated by study results more than five times, there is some support for concluding that these practices constitute desirable components of transition programs and as such, warrant further study. In essence, these findings suggest that the most frequently cited practices, for instance, those supported in more than 25% of the documents reviewed, have been socially validated to some degree and now must be subjected to empirical validation.

Insert Table 4 about here

The results of this study should be interpreted within certain limitations. First, the analysis was conducted in an area where no hard scientific evidence, obtained through rigorously controlled experiments, exists. Consequently, the investigator had to interpret study results and authors' discussions in an effort to determine which elements were included and, subsequently, substantiated or implied as best practices. Limitations also may exist due to the literature base and search procedures utilized. Although numerous searches of the ERIC database were conducted, relevant material may have been overlooked inadvertently, either because relevant documents were not included in ERIC, or they were

missed because of the key words used to direct the search. In addition, research models designed to measure program or program component effectiveness are not abundant. Also, the methodologies utilized in some follow-up studies, such as telephone interviews and parent reports, as well as limited sample sizes raise questions about the validity of the data and the generalizability of the findings. In addition, correlations between outcome variables and process variables are difficult to measure (DeStefano & Wagner, 1991; Halpern, 1990).

Another limitation involves a lack of studies designed to measure best practices as general variables in the transition process. Therefore, only a small number of pseudo or quasi-experimental documents were available for review. It appears that many researchers accept the practices identified in this analysis as "given," or basic to transition programming, and focus their efforts on investigating a particular practice. Somewhere these practices have been endorsed, or again, socially validated by the field as being important elements of the transition process. For instance, Heal, Copher, and Rusch (1990a) conducted a study of OSERS-funded transition projects to determine the processes involved in establishing interagency agreements. Rusch and Wehman (e.g., Rusch & Hughes, 1988; Wehman, 1986) have examined supported employment practices to determine effective strategies for placing students with moderate and severe disabilities on the job. Defining and teaching social skills necessary for successful employment has been a recent focus for Chadsey-Rusch (e.g., Chadsey-Rusch, 1990), while Stodden and Ianacone (e.g., Stodden, Ianacone, Boone, & Bisconer, 1987) have developed a model for conducting curriculum-based vocational assessment as an element of transition programming. In each of these examples, the authors have focused on a specific area within the socially validated "practice" itself.

Some may question the validity of aggregating data from such diverse sources as those included in this review. As Halpern (1990) reported, it is difficult, if not impossible, to generalize national practice from studies and situations that are so different. This review,

however, was not an attempt to empirically aggregate data, but rather to present relevant information from a review of literature. The analytic tables and criteria were created to facilitate the review process and presentation of findings.

In one regard, the limitations presented above serve to illustrate a primary outcome associated with this review. Most importantly, we became aware of the lack of empirical support for transition-related practices that have emerged as best or effective. In addition, even though there is supporting evidence, or evidence of social validation to some degree, no "cause and effect" evidence was found for any practice anywhere in the literature.

Recommendations

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P. L. 101-476) requires that we take an outcome-oriented approach and that we include transition planning and activities in the educational programs of students with disabilities. Common sense tells us that all education programs should be developed within an outcome-oriented approach. Current educational initiatives and reform efforts in both "regular" and "special" education require that we restructure the organization and delivery of educational programs. As a result, practitioners are seeking clear, concise prescriptions shown to result in better programs, positive student outcomes, and increased consumer satisfaction. People want to know what works best.

Because there is some support for those practices cited most frequently in the literature reviewed here, it is recommended that they be carefully described and incorporated into transition planning programs for students with disabilities. Only through such a process can we begin to develop empirical evidence for and against particular practices. Clearly, we must put together programs that are built upon solid foundations. In the short term, however, we cannot wait for empirical evidence of effectiveness supporting general transition practices to emerge in order to begin or continue construction. Nationally, programs are being implemented that address transition issues and outcomes of youths. Certainly, these efforts should continue. And since there is some evidence for those

practices listed in Table 4—evidence supported somewhat by outcomes and implied through expert opinion—the programs we build should include such practices.

However, we must go further than program development. As researchers, we must identify parameters which define the practices described above, practices such as paid work experience, parent involvement, and vocational training. Secondly, we must identify indicators for reporting that the practice has been implemented and measures that indicate the level of implementation. Concurrently, we must define and develop indicators and measures for outcomes.

Various outcome models have been suggested (e.g., DeStefano & Wagner, 1991; Halpern, 1992; Harnisch, Wermuth, & Zheng, 1992; Rusch, Kohler, & Hughes, 1992) but they must be applied to specific practices and programs so that effectiveness can be measured. Further, when effectiveness is established, we must communicate to the field what works. At the same time, we must impress upon local providers the importance of their role in helping to collect data from such programs. In the long term, best practices associated with positive student outcomes must be those supported by evidence of effectiveness.

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Table 1

Best Practices in Transition Identified in Follow-Up Studies

Follow-Up Studies	Practices																
	Voc Trng	Parent Inv	Inter-Agency Coll	Indiv Plans/ Plng	Paid Work	Social Skills Trng	Comm-Based Instr	Comm Refer Curr	Foll-up Emp Serv	Voc Assess	Inte-gration	IEP Reflects Trans	Early Trans Plng	Employ Skills Trng	Career Ed Curr	Daily Lvg Trng	Acad Skills Trng
Edgar & Levine (1986), Kortering & Edgar (1988)			I														
Hasazi et al. (1985)	S				S						I						
Mithaug et al. (1985)	S	I				S											
Schalock et al. (1986)	S	S		I			I	I	I								
Kranstover et al. (1989)		I				I											
Haring et al. (1990)		I	I														
Clark et al. (1987)	I																
Wise & Matthews (1987)	I	I		I	S					I							
Wehman et al. (1985b)	I	I	I				I	I	I								
Sitlington et al. (1989)	I			I	S	I											I
Humes & Brammer (1985)	I	I		I								I	I				
Wehman et al. (1985c)		I	I														
Fardig et al. (1985)	I				I	I				I				I	I	I	
Zigmond & Thornton (1985)[a]																	
Brunnks & Thurlow (1988)[a]																	
de Bettencourt et al. (1989)[a]																	
Kregel et al. (1986)[a]																	
Total S	3	1			3	1											
Total I	6	7	4	4	1	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Note. S - substantiated by study results; I - implied by author(s). Full citations are included in the reference listing. Practices are listed from the most frequently cited to the least frequently cited.

[a]No recommendations pertaining to the practices were made in these studies.

Table 2

Best Practices in Transition Identified in Theory-Based and Opinion Literature

Theory-Based and Opinion Literature	Practices																			
	Inter-Agency Coll	Voc Trng	Parent Inv	Interr-Disc Teams	Indiv Plans/ Plng	Empl Input	ID Specific Outc	Voc Assess	Paid Work	Comm-Based Instr	Comm Refer Curr	Inte-gration	IEP Refl Trans	F-up Emp Serv	Social Skills Trng	Career Ed Curr	Daily Lvg Trng	Acad Skills Trng	Early Trans Plng	Inter Agency Agrmt
Halpern (1985)	1	1	1	1			1					1			1	1	1	1		1
Wehman (1990)	1	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1							
Rusch & Phelps (1987)	1	1		1	1	1		1	1					1						
Stowitschek & Kelso (1989)	1		1	1	1		1	1					1							
DeStefano (1989)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1		1			1		
McDonnell et al. (1989)	1	1	1			1		1	1	1	1			1		1				
Hoffman (1988)	1		1	1	1	1		1			1									
Hardman & McDonnell (1987)	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	
Edgar (1987)	1	1															1			
Wehman et al. (1985a)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1		1			1	
Will (1984)	1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1		1		1						
Total	11	9	9	8	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	3	3	3	2	2	1

Note. 1 - implied by author(s). Full citations are included in the reference listing. Practices are listed from the most frequently cited to the least frequently cited.

Table 3

Best Practices in Transition Identified in Pseudo- and Quasi-Experimental Studies

Pseudo- and Quasi-Experimental Studies	Practices																				
	Voc Trng	Social Skills Trng	Inter-Agency Coll	Parent Inv	Paid Work	Employ Skills Trng	F-up Emp Serv	Empl Input	Indiv Plans/ Plng	Inter-Disc Teams	Inter-Agency Agrmt	Inte-gration	Daily Lvg Trng	Career Ed Curr	Comm-Based Instr	Voc Assess	ID Specific Outc	Acad Skills	Early Trans Plng	IEP Refl Trans	Comm-Refer Curr
Campbell et al. (1987)	I	S			I	S	I	I					S					I			
Hudson et al. (1988)	S	S		S	S							S						I			
Rogers & Danley (1989)			I								I										
Heal et al. (1990a)			I								I										
Moore et al. (1990)														I							
Edwards et al. (1988)				I		S															
Roessler et al. (1990)	I	I	I		I	I	I	I					I	I	I				I		
Fairweather (1988)	I		I									I									
McDonnell et al. (1986)			I	I					I	I							I		I	I	
Scuccimarra & Speece (1990)					S																
Gill & Edgar (1990)	S									S		S									
Heal et al. (1990b)		S		S			S	S													
Siegel & Gaylord-Ross (n.d.)							I									I					
Haynes & Justice (1988)	I	I	I	I		I		I	I	I	I		I		I	I	I				I
D'Alonzo & Owen (1985)	I	I	I	I	I		I	I	I	I	I			I							
Tilson & Neubert (1988)	I	I		I		I			I						I	I				I	
Benz & Halpern (1986,1987), Halpern & Benz (1987)	I	I	I	I	I				I	I	I	I	I	I							
Rusch & DeStefano (1988)	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I		I	I		I		I	I	I		I
Total S	2	3		2	2	2	1	1				2	1								
Total I	8	7	9	6	5	4	5	5	6	6	5	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2

Note. S - substantiated by study results, I - implied by author(s). Full citations are included in the reference listing. Practices are listed from the most frequently cited to the least frequently cited.

Table 4

Summary Table of Best Practices in Transition Identified in Follow-Up Studies, Pseudo- and Quasi-Experimental Studies, and Theory-Based and Opinion Literature

Practices	Follow-Up Studies		Pseudo-Quasi Studies		Opinion studies	Total	
	S	I	S	I	I	S	I
Vocational training	3	6	2	8	9	5	23
Parent involvement	1	7	2	6	9	3	22
Interagency collaboration/service delivery		4		9	11		24
Social skills training	1	3	3	7	3	4	13
Paid work experience	3	1	2	5	6	5	12
Individual plans/ planning		4		6	7		17
Interdisciplinary transition teams				6	8		14
Follow-up employment services		2	1	5	5	1	12
Employer input			1	5	7	1	12
Integration/LRE/ mainstreaming		1	2	3	6	2	10
Community-based instruction		2		4	6		12
Vocational assessment		2		3	6		11
Community-referenced curricula		2		2	6		10
ID vocational, residential, & social outcomes				3	6		9
Daily living skills training		1	1	4	3	1	8
IEP reflects transition		1		2	5		8
Career ed curricula		1		4	3		8
Employability skills training		1	2	4		2	5
Formal inter-agency agreement				5	1		6
Early transition planning		1		3	2		6
Academic skill training		1		3	2		6

Note. S - substantiated by study results; I - implied by author(s)

Chapter 3

An Analysis of Exemplary Transition Programs: How and Why Are They Selected?

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Career Development for Exceptional Individuals (in press).

Abstract

Transition Research Institute staff at the University of Illinois analyzed a sample of 15 evaluation studies focusing on exemplary programs and practices pertaining to transition services for youths with disabilities. The purpose of the investigation was to examine the methodology used to identify best practices and exemplary programs in transition and to determine what practices are consistently identified as effective across evaluation studies. Areas of analysis included evaluation study demographics, purpose, intended audience, selection process, dissemination strategies, and key program elements and practices identified or recognized in the evaluation process. Results indicated that 42 criteria variables, organized subsequently into seven categories, were used in the evaluation studies to determine which programs were deemed exemplary. Program outcomes and results, cost effectiveness, goals and objectives, and transportability were among the most frequently cited selection criteria. In all, 107 key elements or activities associated with effectiveness or exemplary program status were identified and grouped into 14 categories. Among those variables most frequently cited were vocational assessment practices, supported employment services, parent involvement in planning, community-based instruction, and coordinated service provision. Investigation results also indicated that technical assistance activities and some degree of program replication have resulted from the evaluation studies.

An Analysis of Exemplary Transition Programs: How and Why Are They Selected?

Since the early 1980s, educators, researchers, and policymakers have been investigating the concept of transition from school to community in an attempt to improve the post-school outcomes of individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, in the last decade transition services for youth with disabilities have received federal priority throughout the United States. In fact, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, IDEA (P.L. 101-476), mandated transition services for all students in special education age 16 and older. Such increased focus and activity surrounding transition have resulted in the publication of a number of empirical and theoretical studies concerned with best practices in transition. The most frequently cited "best practices" include interagency cooperation and collaboration, vocational skill training, paid work experience during high school, individual transition plans and planning, and parental involvement in the transition process (DeStefano, 1989; Kohler, in press).

Another related product of the transition initiative has been reports on evaluations undertaken to identify programs or practices that are "effective" or "exemplary" in the delivery of transition services; generally these contain one or more program elements from the best-practice list. This article focuses on a sample of these evaluation studies.

Two questions arise with respect to these evaluations. First, how are the exemplary programs identified and selected? And second, what evidence is offered to support the "best practices" as having a positive impact on student outcomes? In an effort to answer these questions, researchers at the Transition Institute at the University of Illinois analyzed 15 studies that have identified effective or exemplary transition programs. The purpose of this analysis was twofold: (a) to examine the methodology used to identify best practices and exemplary programs in transition, and (b) to determine what practices are consistently identified as effective across evaluation studies.

This paper presents an overview of the investigation, including demographic characteristics of the evaluation studies, selection processes used to identify exemplary practices and programs, and dissemination methods for study findings. Program elements cited within and across the studies are analyzed and used as a basis for arriving at a set of agreed-upon best practices in transition. Finally, implications of the results are presented.

Method

Exemplary Program Studies

A multisource search was conducted to locate reports or studies on identification of best practices or exemplary programs in transition. Mail and telephone surveys were conducted to solicit evaluation reports on best practices from state-level department of education transition personnel in all 50 states, regional resource centers in special education, and other pertinent clearinghouses and information networks. Additional data sources included the ERIC database, SpecialNet, and resources within the Transition Research Institute's library. As candidate documents were located, they were screened according to the following criteria: (a) The document described a local, state, regional, or national evaluation of transition programs or practices; (b) the document contained sufficient description of the process by which the programs or practices were evaluated and selected as effective; and (c) the document included a detailed summary of the selected programs or practices. After applying these criteria to over 40 documents, a final sample of 15 documents pertaining to identification of exemplary programs was selected for analysis.

For definitional purposes, the 15 documents are referred to as *evaluation studies* throughout this article. Some of these studies represented efforts to identify effective programs and practices with a specific focus (e.g., Gugerty, Tindall, Heffron, & Dougherty, 1988). Others represented state efforts to identify exemplary education or rehabilitation programs in general (e.g., California Department of Education, 1989, 1991). In the latter case, only programs providing transition services were used in our analysis of best practices.

Instrumentation

A 28-item coding form was developed to structure the analysis of the evaluation reports. Organized into seven sections, the form included both menu-type and open-ended items. An overview of the instrument is provided in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Procedure and Reliability

Each evaluation report was reviewed and coded by two members of the research team. After independently reviewing a particular study, reviewers recorded their individual findings on the instrument.

Upon completion of the reviews, data from each reviewer were entered into a database file; thus, each evaluation study was represented twice (once for each reviewer). After printed output was produced, between-rater differences in the data reported for each study were noted. Reviewers then met to resolve differences. After substantiating decisions with reference to the original documents, 100% agreement was reached. Printed output was again produced and all revisions were reviewed for accuracy by a third person. In addition, data input was checked independently for three randomly chosen evaluation studies by three reviewers; the reliability of data input was greater than 99%.

To facilitate analysis of the methodology used in the evaluation studies, the 42 variables identified as selection criteria were grouped into seven categories. The 107 variables identified as key elements were grouped into 14 categories, according to type of activity represented. For instance, the variables "student follow-up," "ongoing program evaluation," and "innovativeness" were grouped together in the category labeled "program evaluation/dissemination." Four members of the research team independently categorized the variables. Final assignment of a variable to a category was based on consensus among the four researchers.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

Of the 15 evaluation studies, more than half (8) were funded by a federal agency; about one-fourth (4) were funded by state agencies. The funding source was not specified for three studies.

The geographic scope of the sample of evaluation studies ranged from national (3), to regional (5), to statewide (7). For example, the Wisconsin study (Gugerty et al., 1988) to identify exemplary applications of Perkins' dollars for special education students examined programs nationwide. The Rehabilitation Network of New England (1988, 1989) featured rehabilitation programs within the New England area. Both Missouri (University of Missouri, 1988) and Illinois (Burroughs & Leininger, 1989) were among the states that identified exemplary programs within their borders. Titles of the 15 evaluation study documents constituting the sample, their geographic scope, the originating or sponsoring organization, and their funding source are described in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

The types of programs identified as exemplary differed across studies, with identification of multiple program types typical within a single evaluation study. The program types most frequently included were secondary education (cited in 13 studies), postsecondary education (13), rehabilitation (11), adult service (7), and mental health, mental retardation, social service, and elementary education programs (cited in 6 studies each).

Populations served by the exemplary programs recognized in the studies included youths at-risk (14 studies), individuals with learning disabilities (12), individuals with emotional or behavioral disorders, multiple handicaps, and physical disabilities (11 studies each), persons with hearing and visual impairments (10), and persons with speech or other health impairments (9). To a lesser extent, persons with mental retardation, deaf-blind

individuals, persons with developmental disabilities, and parents were served by programs selected as exemplary.

Evaluation Purpose

The most frequently cited purposes for conducting the evaluation studies included dissemination (cited in 13 studies), replication (10), and recognition of the selected programs (8). Generally, multiple purposes were identified for a study. Replication or program development were the outcomes most often associated with the evaluation studies themselves. Thus, program replication was cited as an outcome of nine studies; new program development of five studies. For five of the studies no outcome or impact was specified; additional research was cited as the impact from two studies.

Intended Audiences

The most frequently cited target audiences for information generated by a study included education agencies (cited as an audience in 12 studies); adult service providers or universities (7 studies each); consumers, regional resource centers, or educators (6 studies each); and state or federal agencies (4 studies each).

Selection Process

A variety of processes were used within the evaluation studies to identify and select the best practices or programs. For example, eight studies allowed self-nomination; peer nomination procedures were used in six of the evaluation studies. Finally, nine studies included other nomination procedures such as nomination by a relevant organization.

Once programs were nominated, a number of data sources were used to determine which programs were selected as best or exemplary. Most frequently, these sources included a formal application (cited in 9 studies), which described the program or practices and provided some evidence of effectiveness such as outcome or cost-effectiveness data. These data sources were gathered or analyzed by expert review (cited in 11 studies), application form (10), site visit (7), and by peer review or telephone interview (each cited in 2 studies).

Based on the analysis of these data, the final designation of exemplary status was made by a review panel (in 6 of the studies), an advisory council (5), or project staff (3).

In most of the evaluation studies, multiple criteria were used to determine which programs were deemed exemplary. In all, 42 variables constituting selection criteria were cited in the studies. Subsequently, these variables were organized into seven categories: (a) evaluation findings, (b) program type and structure, (c) generalizability, (d) philosophy, (e) support services, (f) personnel, and (g) program content. These categories and variables, including citation frequency, are listed in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

Evaluation findings were used most frequently as the basis for determining exemplary status. Nine different variables, cited a total of 39 times, fell into this category. Among these, the most frequent included outcomes and results of a particular program, program evaluation information, and cost effectiveness. Program type and structure was the second most frequently cited category, represented by 9 variables cited a total of 33 times. Within this category, the most frequently cited variables included program goals and objectives, organizational base, type of program, and innovativeness. In the generalizability category, transportability of the program was the most frequently cited variable.

Dissemination Strategies

The methods used by the evaluation studies to disseminate their findings were in line with their identified purposes of dissemination and replication. Specifically, 10 studies prepared project publications, 7 provided technical assistance or made conference presentations, and 6 studies provided information through existing information networks. Publication products ranged from 500-page manuals featuring in-depth program descriptions to brief descriptions outlined in study brochures.

Generally, some level or levels of involvement were required of those programs selected as exemplary. Such requirements included providing existing or developing program materials (cited in 7 and 2 studies, respectively), hosting visitors (6 studies), making presentations or providing off-site inservice training (5 studies each), providing telephone or mail technical assistance (5 studies), and providing on-site technical assistance (4 studies).

Key Program Elements and Practices

In all, 107 key elements or activities associated with effectiveness or exemplary program status were identified across the 15 evaluation studies. To facilitate analysis, these variables were grouped into 14 categories (DeStefano, 1989). The categories, variables, and citation frequencies are presented in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

A total of 23 career or vocational variables were cited 52 times across the evaluation studies, thereby comprising the largest category. Vocational assessment, supported employment services, employability skills curriculum, vocational training programs, on-the-job training, and career education experience represent the most frequently cited variables in this group. The second largest category of key elements, systematic interdisciplinary transition planning, was comprised of 10 variables cited a total of 43 times. Within this group, the most frequently cited variables included parent involvement in planning; multidisciplinary transition teams; individual plans or planning; objectives and activities of the individual transition plan (ITP) reflected in the individual education plan (IEP); identification of vocational, residential, and social outcomes; and written transition plans.

Across categories, other frequently cited variables associated with exemplary status included community-based instruction, community-referenced curricula, interagency

coordination of services, integrated settings, education provided in the least restrictive environment, and provision of social skills training.

Limitations

Although the data collection processes of this investigation were standardized and controlled, the findings are subject to several limitations. Specifically the sample was small, and although efforts were made to identify additional studies, the search may have failed inadvertently to produce existing documents recognizing best practices or exemplary programs. Further, the evaluation studies themselves varied tremendously, as evidenced by the description of study demographics. Also, the formats of study findings were quite varied, causing some difficulty in data collection and analysis. In addition, variables identified in the analysis have not been weighted or presented in any other manner than by simple frequency counts. Thus, the variables associated with best practices by a large or rigorously controlled evaluation study and variables identified within a more limited or less rigorously controlled study received equal weight.

Discussion

The independent variables most frequently identified as key elements of transition programs deemed exemplary appear to be related to the list of best practices that have emerged from the field. Specifically, vocational training, parent involvement, multidisciplinary service provision, community-based instruction and curricula, social skills training, and individual plans and planning correspond to the practices investigated by Kohler (in press) for evidence associating them with positive student outcomes. In a review of transition-related literature, Kohler (in press) reported that these practices had been substantiated somewhat by study results or been implied by the authors as desirable components of transition programs, although strong empirical evidence in support of the practices was not found. Identification of these elements, or practices, as components of programs selected as exemplary illustrates that the field is inclined to accept the existence of

a positive relationship between the elements and desirable student outcomes, even though supportive empirical evidence is not clear.

This study did not produce additional empirical evidence supporting the best practices investigated by Kohler (in press). Even though program outcomes frequently were used as a criterion for exemplary status, no empirical evidence directly linking particular variables, or activities, was presented. In most of the evaluation studies, programs were analyzed according to predetermined criteria, often activities associated with perceived best practices, typically followed by evaluation of a program's performance with respect to the practices. Generally, exemplary status was then awarded to those programs that achieved positive outcomes through unique or comprehensive application of the previously identified "best practices."

Results of the present investigation point to several positive outcomes associated with the process of selecting exemplary programs. First, it is reassuring to note that specific criteria, in many cases outcome or evaluation data, were applied in the selection of programs. Thus, there was no evidence to suggest that decisions on exemplary status were either arbitrary or political.

Second it appears that dissemination of information about the selected programs had occurred through publications or conference presentations. Further, technical assistance for entities wishing to replicate programs identified as exemplary also appeared to be available to some degree.

Current and past efforts to compare outcomes among programs have met with difficulty (DeStefano & Wagner, 1991; Halpern, 1990; Rusch, Kohler, & Hughes, 1992). This was also the case in the present investigation of exemplary program evaluation studies. Although program outcomes were frequently used as a selection criterion, they typically lacked clear definition and thus varied across programs as well as within and across evaluation studies. Until consistent measures are developed and applied in the analysis of relationships

between particular program activities and student outcomes, effective practices cannot be identified fully. Specifically defined outcomes as a measure of effectiveness, such as competitive employment of individuals with disabilities, would aid the analysis of programs and their practices.

One impact of the exemplary-program evaluation studies has been project replication. Future investigations should assess both the degree to which replication has occurred and the outcomes attained by the newly created projects. New or replicated projects are desirable; however, they should be subject also to some outcome standard or measure. In other words, outcomes must be evaluated for three distinct program groups: (a) programs identified as exemplary, (b) new programs resulting from replication, and (c) the evaluation studies themselves. Again, consistently defined outcomes and measures for each group would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this task.

Although dissemination of information has occurred to some degree as a result of the exemplary-program evaluation studies, additional efforts should be made to assist practitioners in adopting what appear to be promising practices. For instance, Rusch et al. (1992) reported that model transition projects identified lack of trained personnel or people-related issues as barriers to program implementation or effectiveness. Yet, the investigation of exemplary program evaluation studies revealed that 17 variables associated with staff development, personnel, and public relations issues (cited 25 times) were included as key elements in several programs identified as "exemplary." Persons with knowledge of these activities must be linked with those who have identified such barriers. This linkage is one justification for the efforts and funds expended to identify exemplary programs. Also, since efforts are underway nationally to implement the transition-related mandates of IDEA, it is essential that information on promising practices and effective programs be disseminated widely.

In conclusion, although the body of empirical evidence in support of the "best practices" was not expanded as a result of this investigation, there is some basis to conclude that these activities—specifically these 14 categories listed in Table 4—are associated with effective transition programming. A secondary education program structured around the most frequently cited variables in each category would feature community-referenced curricula focused on career education, academic competencies, and employability, social, independent living, and vocational skills. Instruction, including community-based instruction, on-the-job training, and vocational training, would be delivered in integrated settings and least restrictive environments. Postsecondary educational and employment opportunities and services, including job placement and supported employment services, would be routinely addressed during the secondary education period. Individual student programs (reflected in the IEP) addressing specific post-school vocational, social, and residential outcomes would be developed through systematic planning involving the student, parents, and school and adult services personnel. Counseling, vocational assessment, academic tutoring (including peer tutoring), and other ancillary services or supports necessary for student achievement or performance would be identified through the planning process and provided cooperatively by education and community providers. Qualified staff and sufficient resources would be allocated to facilitate program delivery, either through new program development, staff training, or restructuring. Finally, school leavers would be followed up and post-school outcomes assessed as one source of evaluation data to facilitate ongoing program improvement.

In summary, the particular combination or structure of these elements in a program will vary among communities. The large number of variables (i.e., 107) identified as key program elements illustrates that these practices are delivered through diverse strategies--depending, among other things, on the population served, setting, context, and scope of the program. The implementation of these practices and subsequent evaluation of

effectiveness should assist the field in making real improvements in the transition outcomes of students with disabilities.

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Table 1

Overview of Coding Instrument

Section	Rationale for Inclusion	Items
Demographic information	Context is believed to be an important determinant of the applicability and utility of best-practices evaluation.	1. Identification number 2. Evaluation date 3. Title 4. Originating organizations 5. Contact person 6. Address 7. State 8. Phone 9. Funding source 10. Geographic scope 11. Types of programs or practices identified 12. Population serviced by the program or practice
Evaluation purpose	The stated purpose of an evaluation has implications for its design and dissemination strategies.	13. Purpose of evaluation 14. Purpose statement (as stated in report) 15. Intended impact of evaluation
Intended audiences	The specific circumstances and information needs of the audiences should dictate the design and dissemination strategies.	16. Audiences identified in report
Selection process	A description of the process by which candidate programs or practices were recruited and best practices were identified has implications for the validity and utility of the evaluation.	17. Method of selection 18. Section criteria used 19. Data sources used in identification 20. Number of programs reviewed 21. Number of programs selected
Dissemination strategy	The manner in which the evaluation report is organized and made available to intended audiences impacts utility.	22. Level of program involvement 23. Dissemination products 24. Format of study or report 25. Fields included in program overviews
Key program elements or practices identified	Practices that are consistently identified across populations, selection processes, and geographic regions are likely to be most effective.	26. Key elements identified
General	Project abstract and reviewers' comments.	27. Abstract of evaluation 28. Other comments

Table 2

Description of Evaluation Studies Included in Exemplary Program Analysis

Scope of Study	Title of Study	Originating Organization	Funding Source
National	Educational Programs That Work (Edition 14)	National Diffusion Network	Federal
	Profiles of Success: Serving Secondary Special Education Students Through The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act - Twelve Exemplary Approaches	The Vocational Studies Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison	Federal
	Successful Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Learning Disabilities: Best Practices	The Wisconsin Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities; the Vocational Studies Center, University of Wisconsin - Madison; Wisconsin Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation	Federal
Region of the nation	PEER Regional Network: Programs That Are Exemplary in Education and Rehabilitation	PEER Regional Network	Federal
	Promising Programs and Practices: A Sourcebook for Rural Educators	Rural Schools Assistance Center, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development	Federal
	Quality Indicators Applicable to Rehabilitation Service Delivery Programs; Catalogue of Exemplary Programs	The Rehabilitation Network of New England	Federal
	Catalogue of Exemplary Programs and Practices	Regional Rehabilitation Exchange of the Southwest Educational laboratory	Federal
	Rural School Source Book: Exemplary Programs, Practices, and Resources for Rural Educators	Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory	Federal
State	Twenty-three Examples of Transition Programs	Interagency Office of Transition Services, Minnesota Dept. of Education	Not specified
	1990 Report to Congress	Illinois Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities	Not specified
	California's Special Education Exemplary Programs, 1988-89	Resources in Special Education; Special Education Division, California Dept. of Education	State
	California's Special Education Exemplary Programs, 1990-91	Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Advisory Committee; Special Education Division, California Dept. of Education.	State
	Innovative Practices in Transition Services	Dept. of Special Education, Illinois State Board of Education	State
	Promising Practices in Transition in Maryland	Division of Special Education, Maryland State Dept. of Education	Not specified
	Special Education Effective Practices/ Model Programs, 1987-88	Dept. of Special Education, University of Missouri	State

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Table 3

Selection Criteria Used in Exemplary Program Evaluation Studies

Category	Variables	Frequency Cited (number of studies)
Evaluation findings	Outcomes and results	10
	Program evaluation	9
	Cost effectiveness	8
	Length of program existence	5
	Program impact	2
	Attendance	2
	Increase in amount of quality of instructional time	1
	Self-evaluation capability	1
	Documentation (complete, up-to-date, and accessible records)	1
Program type and structure	Program goals and objectives	6
	Organizational base	5
	Type of program	5
	Innovativeness	5
	Population served	4
	Service-delivery model	3
	Comprehensiveness of services	3
	Research-based program	1
	Number of students served	1
Generalizability	Transportability	9
	Readiness to disseminate	5
	Continuation of program	2
Philosophy	Practices that facilitate increased equity and integration	6
	Philosophical foundation for the program	2
	Education in LRE	2
	Responsiveness	2
	Consumer control	1
	Multicultural considerations	1
	Equal access	1
Personnel	Staffing patterns	6
	General and special education collaboration	2
Program content	Parent involvement	2
	Individualized attention	1
	Direct communication	1
	Personalized approaches	1
	Small student groups	1
	Model curriculum standards	1
Support services	Student assessment	1
	Guidance	1
	Counseling	1
	Career development	1
	Transition counseling	1

Table 4

Key Elements Identified in Exemplary Programs

Category	Variables	Frequency Cited (number of studies)
Career/vocational training	Vocational assessment	7
	Supported employment services	7
	Secondary curriculum includes employability skills	5
	Mainstreamed vocational program	4
	Special vocational program	4
	Secondary curriculum includes OJT	4
	Career education experiences	3
	Job placement services	2
	Transportation services	2
	Simulated business environment	1
	Job club	1
	Postsecondary employability skills training	1
	Continuum of vocational training opportunities	1
	Transitional services	1
	Work study	1
	Work training	1
	Pre-employment training	1
	Job matching	1
	Vocational training	1
	Vocational education a priority	1
	Pre-enrollment learning activities	1
	Diversified training	1
	Continuum of optional work experiences	1
Systematic interdisciplinary transition planning	Parent involvement in planning	10
	Transition team includes student, parents, school personnel, and adult service system providers	8
	Objectives and activities of ITP reflected in IEP	6
	Individual planning and plans	6
	Vocational, residential, and social outcomes identified	5
	Written transition plans	4
	Students made aware of agencies and services	1
	Interdisciplinary team approach for treatment planning and process	1
	Transition counseling	1
	Objectives	1
Community-based life and work skills curricula	Community-based instruction	10
	Community-referenced curricula	9
	Community-based assessment	1
	Career and vocational curriculum infused throughout subject areas	1
Appropriate integration	Integrated setting	8
	Education provided in LRE	7
	Opportunity to earn high school diploma	4
	Successful change from shelter to community-based model	1
Interagency/interdisciplinary collaboration	Coordination for service provision	9
	Formal interagency agreement	3
	Collaboration with university and school district	2
	General/special education collaboration	2
	Vocational team	1
	Coordinated JTPA programs	1
Support services	Counseling	3
	Provision of ancillary services	2
	Comprehensiveness of services	2
	Motivational services	2
	Assistance/adaptive devices	1
	Student support	1
	Diagnostic services	1
	Biofeedback training	1
	Assessment feedback to students	1
	Ongoing assessment	1
	Program flexibility	1
	Generic model	1

Table 4 continued

Category	Variables	Frequency Cited (number of studies)
Staff development/allocation	Qualifications of staff	3
	Staff development	3
	Use of volunteers	1
	Low staff turnover	1
	Staffing patterns	1
	Designated vocational instructors	1
	Staff cooperation	1
	Low staff/client ratio	1
	Personnel preparation	1
Public and employer relations	Business/education partnership	3
	Public relations	2
	Administrative, school board, and community support for the project	2
	Assistance to prospective employers	1
	Client/family/employer orientation and support	1
	Employer modification of work environment	1
	Continuous assessment of employment opportunities and job requirements	1
	Multicultural considerations	1
Academic instruction	Postsecondary education services	3
	Academic tutoring	3
	Remedial academic services	2
	Cognitive retraining	1
	Educational services	1
	Orientation skills	1
	Basic skills assessment	1
Social or independent living skills training	Social skills training	5
	Independent living skills	3
	Fitness training	1
	Communication skills training	1
	Support activities in areas of daily living and work skills	1
	Self-advocacy instruction	1
Program evaluation or dissemination	Student follow-up	3
	Ongoing program evaluation	2
	Innovativeness	1
	Attendance monitoring	1
	Information dissemination	1
	Curriculum monitoring	1
Instructional issues and strategies	Peer tutoring	2
	Behavioral point system	1
	Prescriptive learning	1
	Use of computer-aided instruction	1
	Specific coordinated curriculum	1
	Curriculum development	1
Funding	Sufficient allocation of resources	2
	Multiple utilization of funds	1
	Creative use of resources	1
	Cost reduction over workshop	1
Early intervention	Planning begins prior to 14 years of age	2
	Vocational training begins at junior high level	1

Chapter 4

Educational Reform and Special Education: Foundations for a National Research Agenda Focused Upon Secondary Education

John R. Johnson

and

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RUNNING HEAD: Educational Reform and Special Education

Abstract

In this paper we review recent literature addressing education reform. In particular, we describe the context, attitudes, and perspectives of authors in relation to students with disabilities. Notably, we suggest several observations and implications related to the education of young people with disabilities. Finally, we recommend a cooperatively focused agenda that is predicated upon the complete elimination of any distinction between regular and special education.

Educational Reform and Special Education: Foundations for a National Research Agenda Focused Upon Secondary Education

Passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1990 (P.L. 101-476) marked a new era of accountability in secondary education and transition-related services. The intent of this mandate is to ensure that students with disabilities receive a coordinated education that results in desired post-school outcomes, including the likelihood of post-secondary education and training, probable employment, and living independently. The promise for the future is the emergence of an educational system that will result in benefits for all students with disabilities after leaving school.

Unfortunately, this hallmark legislation arrives at a time when American education is in the throes of a severe crisis. There is ample evidence that schools are failing to achieve desired and expected outcomes for all students regardless of ability (e.g., Boyer, 1983; Education Commission of the States, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Kozol, 1991; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1990; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985; Sizer, 1992; Toch, 1991). Serious questions have been raised about the effectiveness of mandatory education. These questions pose a serious dilemma for educators working for the full inclusion of students with disabilities into the mainstream of American public education.

In our opinion, the success of IDEA being implemented as envisioned by its formulators hinges upon the health of all elements of public school education. In this paper, we review the literature on education reform in order to: (a) summarize the major issues of concern addressed by the literature, (b) determine the extent to which issues related to students with disabilities have been addressed, (c) describe the context, attitudes, and perspectives of students with disabilities presented in the literature, (d) describe some general observations and implications related to the education of persons with disabilities, and (e) recommend that education reformists, policy makers, researchers, the education community, and the

general public develop a cooperatively-focused agenda. This final recommendation is predicated upon the complete elimination of any distinction between regular and special education.

Education Reform

Education in general and schools in particular have come under close scrutiny and intense criticism over the past 10 years. This criticism, however, is not unique to the 1980's; education has been a popular target of reform for over four decades. Arthur Bestor's (1953) book entitled, Educational Wastelands, was an early example calling for the reform of secondary education and a harbinger of events to come. Since then, and particularly during the 1980s, the number of reports calling for education reform increased dramatically. Most recently, Toch (1991) traced the growth and status of the excellence in education movement during the 1980s. He cited more than 17 different reports focusing upon education reform. Interestingly, few national reports have focused in any significant way upon educational reform that addresses children who do not go on to college. Further, most existing reports ignored young people at risk, young people with disabilities, and young people who wish to be taught how to obtain a meaningful job and live in our society with the primary goal of being a satisfied and contributing member. We reviewed ten reports published since 1983 to identify issues comprising the current focus and national agenda for education reform. In particular, these reports were selected on the basis of their wide publicity and impact on education reform efforts.

A Nation at Risk (NCEE, 1983)

A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform was released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE, 1983). Thirteen performance and achievement indicators were identified by the National Commission as being below national expectations. Of these 13 indicators, 10 were drawn from the results of standardized tests. In addition to identifying indicators of problems associated with student performance and achievement, the National Commission also presented findings related to curricular

content, instructional time, and teaching (e.g., preparation, qualifications, availability). Recommendations were presented in these and other areas of concern (e.g., leadership and fiscal support). Two statements acknowledged concern for students with disabilities. The first was the acknowledgment of a teacher shortage for "handicapped students." A second recommendation called for extending the school year to ensure time for programs for students with special needs.

Making the Grade (TCF, 1983)

Making the Grade was released by the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy (TCF, 1983). The first section of this report included findings of the task force. The remainder of the report included a background paper written by Paul E. Peterson for the Twentieth Century Fund that provided the basis for the organization of the task force. This latter section addressed the federal role in education over the past few decades with a specific focus on how "...the federal government [should] assist in the maintenance and operation of the nation's elementary and secondary schools" (p. 34).

Ten areas of concern were discussed, including: (a) excessive burdens on schools and teachers; (b) federal presence and involvement in education; (c) federal commitment to education; (d) the quality of congressional and executive leadership; (e) the quality of teachers; (f) literacy in the English language; (g) competency and skill in science and mathematics; (h) improvement and expansion of educational research; (i) opportunities for parents to choose schools; and, (j) leadership of local and state governments in education.

In his background paper included in the report, Peterson (1983) wrote that "While areas of deficiency can be discerned, there is little evidence for concluding that the American system of education is in serious trouble, much less that it has failed" (p. 35). Of interest was the focus of the paper on the problems associated with pull-out programs, bilingual education, and the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142). Peterson (1983)

concluded with recommendations that established the basis for the organization of the task force by the Twentieth Century Fund.

Several observations about the Twentieth Century Fund's report are noteworthy, particularly in contrast with other reports released during the early 1980s. This report viewed efforts to educate students with disabilities in a favorable light by stating, "Accordingly, the Task Force supports continuing federal efforts to provide special educational programs for the poor and for the handicapped" (p. 15). However, several concerns also were noted in the background paper by Peterson (1983). In particular, escalating costs, difficulties associated with identification and classification of students with disabilities, and many of the procedural requirements of P.L. 94-142 were mentioned. Peterson (1983) also addressed concerns with the efficacy of Title I pull-out programs although the involvement of students with disabilities was not specifically discussed.

High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America (Boyer, 1983)

Boyer (1983) provided supporting evidence of declines in student performance and achievement. Boyer (1983) also provided a brief review of the history of American schools including an analysis of the goals of American public education and an examination of course requirements and curricular content. Recommendations were proposed for the composition of a core curriculum with a clear emphasis on academic subjects. One core proposal was "The meaning of vocation," which involved an academic approach to the understanding of the culture, significance, and value of work.

Interestingly, Boyer (1983) included a chapter entitled "Transition to Work and Learning" implying that transition involves "moving from high school to college or to work" (p. 118). Boyer (1983) raised several concerns relevant to the transition of students from high school to work. For example, he noted, "Most high schools have little or no information about what their vocational-education graduates are doing" (p. 121). He argued that studies have shown that job prospects for graduates of vocational programs are no better than those for students in nonspecialized programs. Boyer (1983) also addressed the

issue of tracking by citing evidence that many students were enrolled in vocational programs due to the belief that they were unable to be successful with academic subjects. Boyer (1983) proposed a "Transition School" in which students would be given the opportunity to pursue more specialized training or "elective clusters" during their last two years of schooling.

Under the rubric of "special students," Boyer (1983) addressed concerns of the gifted and high-risk student. High-risk students were described solely in terms of students who drop out of school. Boyer (1983) recommended linkages among high schools, colleges and businesses. Once again, he addressed the needs of gifted and "needy" students. "Needy students" were described in terms of individuals experiencing difficulty with English as a second language. Finally, Boyer (1984) addressed issues related to school management and leadership and then devoted a chapter to an analysis of the public and fiscal support for public education. Examples were provided that illustrated the need for additional resources to repair and upgrade deteriorating school buildings and equipment. The final chapter proposed recommendations for improving the quality of general education.

Clearly, this text made a significant contribution to providing evidence for the concerns of early educational reformists. However, it is important to note that this text made not a single reference to programs, issues, or concerns of students with disabilities in American public schools.

Horace's Compromise (Sizer, 1992)

Horace's Compromise (Sizer, 1992) was originally published in 1984. This report provided an overview of the conditions of schools from the perspective of Horace, a composite and fictitious character, who Sizer (1992) believed represented many veteran, public school teachers. Sizer (1992) provided an ethnographic perspective that adopted an "insider's" or "roaming the hall" view of the conditions of schools. In essence, Sizer (1992) echoed many of the findings of Boyer (1983) while articulating in great detail the ambience, human qualities, and dilemmas of the typical American school. However, Sizer (1992) took

issue with some of the recommendations for reform proposed by Boyer (1983) and other reports. For example, Sizer (1992) considered the legislation of a mandatory common core of subjects to be "...an abuse of state power, an excessive reach of political authority" (p. 88). He recommended the cessation of compulsory schooling and the institution of voluntary schooling upon the attainment of minimum educational competencies. However, he also suggested that there was a need for a more cohesive and a well articulated curriculum. Sizer (1992) recommended that the curriculum become more focused on fewer subjects with an emphasis on core academic subjects. He cited the Paideia Proposal (Adler, 1982) as an example.

Only one reference was made by Sizer (1992) to students with disabilities. A student with a severe hearing impairment was quoted to demonstrate the educational motivations of a student with a disability.

A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future (Goodlad, 1984)

A Place Called School (Goodlad, 1984) was the second in the series of scholarly examinations of public education during the early 1980s. The first three sentences of this text echoed the sentiments of A Nation at Risk (NCEE, 1983) and High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America (Boyer, 1983). Goodlad (1984) stated, "American schools are in trouble. In fact, the problems of schooling are of such crippling proportions that many schools may not survive. It is possible that our entire public education system is nearing collapse" (p. 1). Goodlad (1984) described the findings of a study of a sample of schools he believed typified public schools around the country. He concluded that reform efforts must focus on schools as the unit of improvement and that an attitude of caring for schools and education must emerge. Goodlad (1984) examined these themes and focused primarily upon the same general areas of concern addressed by Boyer (1984).

The only reference to concerns specific to students with disabilities made by Goodlad (1984) was the degree to which special education teachers felt adequately prepared to teach or address student needs. Goodlad (1984) noted that a greater number of special education

teachers who worked with secondary-level students felt less adequately prepared compared to the number working with elementary students.

The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace (Powell, Farrar, & Cohen, 1985)

Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) presented a perspective of high schools as educational "shopping malls." Their book entitled The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace, included references to the education of individuals with disabilities. The first chapter expounded on the metaphor of the "shopping mall high school" by describing characteristics shared by both shopping malls and high schools. References to students with disabilities addressed curricular options, services mandated by law, and the high proportion of students in special education and remedial education. Also addressed were concerns related to the time spent by counselors on special education students at the expense of time spent on those students without disabilities. It also was noted that students with disabilities were attending regular schools and regular classes. Powell et al. (1985) referred to "specialty shops" which, according to the authors, serve students who "...are regarded by the school as special, as preferred customers" (p. 119). They noted that "A disproportionate fraction of adult time, energy, and resources is lavished on them" (p. 119). One type of specialty shop focused upon the "special-needs shop", which served primarily students with disabilities. This section addressed the passage of P.L. 94-142, the IEP, collaboration between special education and general education teachers, mainstreaming, support services (e.g., sign language translators), the caring and commitment of special educators, and the best balance between challenging work, high expectations, and probability for success. Powell et al. (1985) commented that, "...students classified under P.L. 94-142 have access to a wider range of programs and resources. They are more comprehensively and consistently served than other students and thus form a specialty shop" (p. 126). Another section in the same chapter addressed the admissions criteria for determining "specialness" that allow selection and admission of students into

special-needs shops. A third section addressed the advocacy efforts on behalf of students with disabilities.

The fourth chapter entitled "The Unspecial" addressed concerns of nondisabled students. The contrast between "special-needs" students (e.g., students with disabilities) and students considered "unspecial" was emphasized from the perspective of disparities in services and resources. To summarize, the authors quoted a counselor: "'This is terrible to say,' apologized a counselor, 'but it's not fair that all the money be put into many youngsters that will never be the doctors and lawyers and the leaders of society" (p. 175).

A number of recommendations were advanced at the end of this book. One of the recommendations suggested that "The most obvious way to create more focused educational purpose is to expand upon existing practice: to create more specialty shops" (p. 316).

A New Agenda for Education (Gardner, 1985)

This report, published by Gardner in 1985 and sponsored by the Heritage Foundation, introduced four recommendations: (a) reducing federal involvement in education, (b) restoring the academic and moral emphasis of education, (c) revising teacher training, and (d) allowing competition in education. Relative to reducing federal involvement, Gardner (1985) identified four problems related to the education of individuals with disabilities including mislabeling, fragmentation of the curriculum, mainstreaming, and litigation. Gardner (1985) cited the proliferation of students labeled as learning disabled as a major problem facing education. She concluded that the resource room and the pull-out program models have become a dumping ground for regular students experiencing academic difficulties. She also indicated that general educators are usually ill equipped to deal with students with disabilities. Finally, Gardner (1985) suggested that the due process provisions of P.L. 94-142 "...encourage parents to sue whenever they are dissatisfied with a teacher's or school's handling of their child" (p. 35). This, Gardner (1985) believes, has caused a polarity between schools and parents of students with disabilities.

In short, Gardner's (1985) statement, "Broad mandates that impose rigid standards and procedures...dull America's traditional sense of mutual obligation and charity and the resultant capacity for innovative local solutions" (p. 33), implies that the education of individuals with disabilities should be a function of the kindness and charity of the local community—that the education of citizens with disabilities is in essence, optional.

In the Name of Excellence: The Struggle to Reform the Nation's Schools. Why It's Failing and What Should Be Done (Toch, 1991)

Toch (1991) reviewed the reform efforts of the 1980s and concluded that "Public educators lost the nation's confidence and they paid the price" (p. 39). Subsequent chapters discussed the economic basis and interests in educational reform followed by a description of how reform efforts undertaken by the State of Texas and attempts during the 1980s to improve curricula and instruction in the classroom were undermined. It was in this latter discussion that Toch (1991) addressed the problems of classification, categorization, and placement of students with disabilities. Toch (1991) summarized the functions of P.L. 93-112 and P.L. 94-142 and addressed problems associated with increased numbers of students classified as learning disabled, the stigma associated with special education, low expectations, lack of movement back to regular classes, and financial incentives for classifying students as learning disabled. Finally, Toch (1991) noted the lack of contact and collaboration between bilingual education, special education, and Chapter I teachers with their "mainstream" faculty colleagues.

We Must Take Charge: Our Schools and Our Future (Finn, 1992)

Finn (1992) identified activities characteristic of the reform movement of the 1980s (e.g., increasing standards of student achievement, testing and assessment, school restructuring, school effectiveness). Finn (1992) took issue with mainstreaming in special education commenting that the politically correct position is that children of widely differing levels of ability and prior attainment should be mixed in all schools and classrooms. Just as handicapped children should be mainstreamed into regular classes, so too should high- and

low-achieving youngsters" (pp. 218-219). While Finn (1992) noted that he is strongly opposed to curricular tracking, he was in favor of grouping students functioning at the same level of achievement for instructional purposes.

America 2000: An Education Strategy

The Bush Administration focused upon six goals for attaining educational excellence, to be achieved by the year 2000: (a) all children in America will start school ready to learn; (b) the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent; (c) American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy; (d) U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement; (e) every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and (f) every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. America 2000 presented a national strategy comprised of four parts: (a) better and more accountable schools, (b) a new generation of American schools, (c) a nation of students, and (d) communities where learning is promoted. The rationale and justification for each strategy were supported with a review of the problems and ills identified by those reports reviewed above. Strategies to be implemented by the Bush Administration with respect to each of the four parts of the American 2000 plan were presented. This document concluded with a description of the roles of the President, congress, governors, the business community, the local community, and parents. It should be noted that no reference was made in this document with respect to the education of individuals with disabilities.

Contemporary Special Education Responses to Educational Reform

The reports released during the 1980s calling for educational reform constitute a growing literature base. Two reports not receiving the national attention received by those reviewed here did address problematic issues related to the education of students with disabilities. These reports were The Heritage Foundation Report (May 11, 1984) and Barriers to Excellence: Our Children At Risk released by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS, 1985). Sapon-Sevin (1987) reviewed and analyzed both reports, raising concerns generally applicable to all national reports on education reform. The first observation made by Sapon-Sevin (1987) and other special educators (e.g., Lilly, 1987; Macchiarola, 1989; Shepard, 1987) was that education concerns pertaining to Americans with disabilities were largely ignored. This criticism also is applicable to both America 2000 and numerous responses to America 2000 by educators from the field (e.g., William T. Grant Foundation, 1991). In addition, the two follow-up reports by Finn (1992) and Toch (1991) provided only a cursory examination of problems pertaining to the education of students with disabilities.

Three notable exceptions include the work by Powell et al. (1985), the Heritage Foundation (1984), and the NCAS (1985). The latter two reports identified four concerns in the field of special education: (a) the proliferation of students inappropriately classified and placed in classes for students with learning disabilities and mild mental retardation, (b) costs of educating students with disabilities at the expense of nondisabled students, (c) opening of school records to parents, and (d) the involvement of the federal government to ensure that all students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education.

In her analysis of the national reports on education reform, Sapon-Sevin (1987) identified several concerns about the way in which special education issues were addressed or omitted by the national reports. The first involved the relationship between special and general education. Numerous questions have been raised by special educators about the efficacy of separate special education assessment, classification, class placement,

instructional procedures and minority overrepresentation (Algozzine & Korinek 1985; Algozzine, Morsink, & Algozzine, 1988; Danielson & Bellamy, 1989; Gartner 1986; Hagerty & Abramson, 1987; Lipsky & Gartner, 1989; Reschly, 1988; Sansone & Zigmond, 1986; Wang & Reynolds, 1985; Ysseldyke et al., 1983). These questions have evolved into an on-going debate about the "Regular Education Initiative" (a.k.a., full inclusion) focusing on the merger between special and regular education (Byrnes, 1990; Davis, 1989; Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990; Stainback & Stainback, 1984; Sailor, 1989; Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1986). Sapon-Seven (1987) noted that even those reports critical of policies toward children with disabilities did not question the underlying separateness of special and regular education. For example, Louis Harris (1992) of Louis Harris and Associates argued:

> "Special education was supposed to be the place where those with disabilities and those with lagging ability to learn were given special handling to help them over their disabilities and troubles. But, let's face it, in too many places, it's been the equivalent of a toxic waste dump for those who don't fit into the traditional stereotypes of what a student should be. Have the guts to ask that special ed be restored to what it was supposed to be, and beef up classes for those who don't fit the traditional mold" (p. 14).

The implication of this statement by Harris (1992) is that separation between regular and special education is justified and effective for those in need of "special handling". However, as indicated before, efficacy studies strongly suggest otherwise.

Additional concerns raised by Sapon-Sevin (1987) included the impact of the new standards on students unable to meet them, whether special education students are considered worthy or in need of educational attention, and the assumptions underlying the relationship between educational policy and economic issues. With respect to the latter, Sapon-Sevin (1987) suggested that certain economic and social policies may support the argument that excellence and equity are incompatible and that using economics as a basis

for education reform may lead to detrimental consequences for individuals whose human worth may be devalued by society.

Lipsky and Gartner (1987) presented another salient criticism of the literature on education reform noting that "In education, not only have students with handicapping conditions been ignored in the recent flood of national reports, but the belief persists that they are incapable of learning or behaving appropriately" (p. 70). The quotation made of the counselor reported by Powell et al. (1985) is one example of evidence that this belief is not held exclusively by special educators. It also is representative of leaders in the regular education reform movement. Mortimer Adler (1982), in his treatise, The Paideia Proposal, contended that "With the exception of a few suffering from irremediable brain damage, every child is educable up to his or her capacity. Educable--not just trainable for jobs!" (p. 65).

Greer (1992a) took issue with the findings reported in the education reform literature dealing with the decline in SAT scores, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and drop-out rates. Greer (1992a) also expressed concerns for criticisms of the increasing costs of special education services. He questioned the decline of education by responding "Is education on the brink of disaster? Is special education in decline? I do not think so, but some of our children are" (p. 201). In response to America 2000, Greer (1992b) argued that the plan "...proposes admirable goals but fails to apply them to all children" (p. 296), implying that again, students with disabilities were ignored by recommendations and plans for education reform.

Robert Davila (1991), former Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), responded to questions about how special education fits into America 2000 by stating that the wrong question was being asked. He stated, "Rather than trying to fit into education reform, it is my position that special education and rehabilitation should play a leadership role" (p. 5).

Observations

This review was initiated to summarize areas of concern relevant to regular education reform and focused on the extent to which issues related to students with disabilities have been addressed. The following observations regarding these issues may provide clearer direction for the development of a cooperatively-focused research and training agenda that includes issues related to the education of students with disabilities related to education reform. In particular, we refer to special education exclusively in terms of the education of students with disabilities and attempt to identify similarities and differences with regular education (i.e., education of nondisabled students).

Our first observation is that regular education reformists have not adequately addressed the issues of students with disabilities. It also is clear that special educators have not adequately addressed the failure of our public schools to meet the needs of nondisabled students.

Some very interesting parallels exist between the regular education and special education reform literatures. Our review of regular education reform literature indicated that a number of studies showed declining achievement on SAT scores. Similarly, there has been a number of efficacy studies demonstrating the lack of difference between individuals in separate special education classes and those who are retained in regular education classes. In addition, other studies have shown that students who are retained in regular education classes tend to show higher achievement over time. Clearly, both regular and special educators are concerned with achievement and educational outcomes.

Regular educators have addressed the need for full inclusion of minorities in a core academic curriculum and the elimination of tracking. Special educators begun to address the full inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classes using adaptive curriculum models, and the elimination of the distinction between regular and special education. Regular educators are concerned with low expectations of minority groups; special

educators are concerned with low expectations and the devaluation of students with disabilities.

Transition from school to adulthood has been a clear concern of regular educators. Regular educators are concerned about the transition from school to adulthood and postsecondary education, vocational or technical training, and other opportunities (c.f. Boyer, 1983). Emphasis has been placed on academic curricula to ensure better access to college programs and greater success as an adult. In the meantime, special educators have developed a systematic process for ensuring the successful transition of students with disabilities (Rusch, DeStefano, Chadsey-Rusch, Phelps, & Szymanski, 1992).

Special educators argue that regular educators have ignored them. However, special education has developed as a separate track, where the collaboration and involvement of regular educators has traditionally been discouraged. Both regular and special educators believe in the right of all students to not only a free and appropriate education, but an education that prepares students to serve as contributing and responsible members of a democratic society.

Since the passage of P.L. 94-142, issues of access for students with disabilities have dissolved and issues of quality and effectiveness have come to the forefront. Currently, a major issue involving the education of students with disabilities is not whether they can learn, but what should be learned. This issue is of primary concern since it is clear that a totally academic curricula may be appropriate for many but certainly not all students with disabilities. It is important to note that early efforts defining a core academic curriculum presumed that students had the intellectual ability for the mastery of academic skills and that sufficiently advanced pedagogical methods for teaching such material were available for use by teachers. For many students, the mastery of subjects such as Latin, calculus, and physics is an inappropriate and unreasonable educational goal, regardless of whether intellectual ability or pedagogical methodology are lacking. It also is important to note that an exclusively liberal arts curriculum was originally developed as the educational focus

during a historical period in which students with disabilities were denied access to education. Finally, we would argue that curriculum development in the context of regular education has taken a "macro-level" perspective through which all students are seen as capable of and thus required to learn and master essentially the same skills. An example of such a curriculum was advanced by Mortimer Adler in his Paideia Proposal (1982). On the other hand, curriculum development in special education has adopted a "micro-level" perspective in which the focus of the curriculum is the needs of individual students relevant to future environments in which he or she will participate (e.g., Falvey, 1986).

Finally, school restructuring has been the topic of much discussion (O'Neil, 1990; Tyack, 1990). Articles on school restructuring in the regular education literature have focused primarily on the need for decentralization of authority and leadership, downsizing school populations, revision of curriculum and instruction, paring down middle management, and refocusing efforts on improving the decision-making of teachers (Tyack, 1990). Interestingly, articles in special education have surfaced that address the need to restructure regular education classrooms in order to facilitate full inclusion (e.g., Villa & Thousand, 1992). Issues addressed by these articles include redefining teaching roles (e.g., Graden & Bauer, 1992), development of collaborative teaching models (e.g., Pugach & Johnson, 1990), adapting regular classroom curricula and instruction (e.g., Ford, Davern, & Schnorr, 1992; Wang, 1989), and determining the amount of time spent in specific instructional activities (Brown et al., 1991). Clearly, school restructuring is on the minds of both regular and special educators.

These observations were presented with the intent of demonstrating that while some differences remain to be resolved, there is strong evidence that regular and special educators are addressing common issues. We would argue that more congruence than disparity exists between regular and special education with respect to concerns and issues in the area of education reform. In addition, we believe that the resolution of the differences that do exist

will serve both students with and without disabilities if the resolution focuses on all students.

On the basis of our first observation, we would suggest that while it is easy for special educators to criticize regular education reformists for not addressing the needs of students with disabilities, we would suggest that this is a parochial viewpoint and not very constructive. Special educators must first mainstream, integrate, and fully include themselves as bonafide educators, with the competence and expertise to assist any student in need, before they can expect students with disabilities to be mainstreamed, integrated, and fully included. To accomplish this, we strongly recommend that special educators provide their full support for the reform of public school education in America. In this respect, we recommend that the issues of full inclusion and the merger of regular and special education be placed on the national education reform agenda. Clearly, the merger of special and regular education will require extensive restructuring of schools and teacher training programs throughout the country. However, it also will require a reexamination, if not national debate, on what education is, what our national education goals should be, and how educational goals should be developed for individuals with heterogeneous needs. For this to occur, education reform must address all students, including students with disabilities, and acknowledge and respect not only cultural but intellectual diversity.

Second, continued efforts must be made to evaluate the impact of practices in education reform, full inclusion, and transition. Of particular importance is the need to demonstrate clear relationships between instructional practices, educational achievement, and postsecondary outcomes (Carnine, 1992; Lindsley, 1992). Certainly, strategies for full inclusion might be evaluated in terms of (a) the extent that instructional strategies for full inclusion are replicable and are effective for achieving measurable levels of competence; (b) the extent that full inclusion strategies may be applied within the skill level, management, and resource constraints of regular educators, schools, and classrooms; and (c) the types of

resources and restructuring that will be necessary to achieve clearly defined educational outcomes.

Third, all services currently limited to students with disabilities should be made available to all students. For instance, transition services might be adapted and revised for the early identification of students at risk of dropping out and used to develop plans for drop-out prevention. We also would argue that transition plans should be developed for students who do drop out in order to develop a mechanism to allow students to reconnect with schools, including access to adult education programs. Clearly, re-accessing school services is much more difficult than dropping out. Full inclusion for all secondary students must include a mechanism that allows students to formalize their plans for exiting school. This mechanism must be more than a half-hour talk with a guidance counselor. In addition, all students must be provided the opportunity to ultimately take control of their own lives for better or for worse.

Finally, a better understanding of the impact of the involvement of the local community in the direction and support of our public schools is in order. It is important that a greater effort be made to involve individuals from the community in the development, expansion, improvement and decision-making of our schools. This may have the additional benefit of facilitating greater community participation and access by students with disabilities.

Recommendations

We make the following recommendations with the intent of proposing a cooperative relationship between regular and special educators and ensuring the improvement of America's schools for all children.

Recommendation #1

We argue that special and regular educators must begin to understand that they are addressing the same problems in the same schools. If a discrepancy exists it is primarily an issue of language and communication. While educators talk about problems related to

tracking, special educators are concerned about the efficacy of segregated, pull-out, and "special" programs. In essence while the context, student populations and mechanics may differ, the issues are essentially the same. However, this understanding will require the development of a minimum level of trust among all educators; the trust that all educators are concerned about all students.

Recommendation #2

Related to our first recommendation, special educators must establish a leadership role in education reform in several ways. First, the goal of America 2000 that only 90% of America's students will graduate successfully ready to enter adult life must be unconditionally rejected. This allows a 10% window of failure that will be open for much higher rates over time. In addition, this window for allowing failure may represent the student populations that special educators work with every day. We, therefore, recommend that this national goal be raised to 100% to reflect this nation's commitment to the ideal that the failure of a single student in this country is intolerable.

Recommendation #3

Related to the second recommendation we recommend that graduation and achievement criteria be revised to accommodate the intellectual diversity of all students including students with severe disabilities. In short, we believe that the focus on academic achievement as the sole criteria for judging readiness to participate as a successful American citizen ignores the fact that thousands of Americans with disabilities who have not achieved such academic standards are contributing and participating members of American society. Therefore, we recommend that national standards for judging education achievement and readiness be developed that address the learning and educational characteristics and opportunities of all students including students with disabilities.

Recommendation #4

The education reform literature must be expanded to incorporate findings from efficacy studies and other studies that have focused on the performance and outcomes of students

receiving special education services. At the present, little if any of the education reform literature has specifically addressed the needs of students with disabilities. In addition, research that has provided substantive evidence of effective teaching practices must be addressed for all students.

Recommendation #5

Full inclusion, transition, early intervention, self-determination, and other such issues should no longer be viewed as discrete initiatives specific to special education. We strongly urge a move to placing these issues and concerns on the regular education reform agenda. It is incomprehensible that services are denied to any student on the basis of disability or nondisability.

Recommendation #6

Clearly, the dissemination of information pertaining to best practices and associated outcomes related to the schooling of students with disabilities or deemed at-risk may have tremendous benefit for students who are nondisabled or not at risk. The school of the future must offer effective and new technologies generated from special education and rehabilitation to further the goals of all students with and without disabilities.

Of particular importance is the need to explore the potential benefits of various practices and technologies generated from special education when applied to students without disabilities. For example, we believe the research and practices evolving from transition research and demonstration programs and from the current self-determination model demonstration programs may have tremendous impact on reducing dropout rates, decreasing substance abuse, and providing students the motivation to continue their schooling. We believe that all students should have the opportunity to develop transition plans which focus on their goals as adults and facilitate attainment of these goals.

Recommendation #7

While school restructuring has been an issue for several years, it is clear that much of the focus has been on the organization and management of the internal business of schools

as it has been conducted traditionally. A more focused approach that addresses school restructuring specific to student-referenced issues should be considered. For example, we believe that changes pertaining to the scope and breadth of instruction will require a national reformulation of the school year. In addition, we believe that those students who drop out of school should have access to expanded opportunities to renew or continue their schooling.

Recommendation #8

Our final recommendation involves the development of a research agenda that specifically focuses on the impact of recommendations from the education reform literature. Specifically, it should be a national imperative to determine the extent to which specific reform recommendations have been implemented and to evaluate outcomes associated with their implementation. In addition, we strongly urge a review of current initiatives to determine the extent to which specific practices currently limited to students receiving special education might benefit students without disabilities, particularly students deemed at-risk. Finally, the extent to which a focus on traditional academic standards may produce barriers to successful school achievement must be examined. In short, we recommend the development of a research agenda that focuses on the merger of special and regular education reform activities that benefit all students.

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Chapter 5

Secondary Special Education and Transition Services: Identification of Issues and Recommendations for Future Research and Demonstration

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RUNNING HEAD: Future Research and Demonstration

Career Development for Exceptional Individuals (in press)

Abstract

A review of the literature and research involving the secondary transition of students with disabilities since 1984 was conducted to identify issues and concerns related to transition and generate recommendations that may be useful in developing directions for future research and demonstration activities. Recommendations were generated under seven areas of concern including drop-out prevention, student and parent involvement, transition planning, curriculum and instruction, best practices, transition policy, and future research and demonstration activities. Concerns and recommendations for future research and demonstration activities were also solicited from the field. A summary of all concerns and recommendations is provided to facilitate the development of policy and future demonstration activities involving the transition and postsecondary outcomes of students with disabilities.

Secondary Special Education and Transition Services: Identification of Issues and Recommendations for Future Research and Demonstration

Transition was introduced in 1983 as a priority for students with disabilities with a policy paper released by the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) (Will, 1983). Almost 10 years later transition has emerged as a federally-mandated "set of activities" that schools must provide when preparing students for the demands of an adult life.

The groundwork for the transition initiative has been laid over the past 50 years in the areas of work-study, career education, employment training, and follow-up. However, much of this prior work did not address the postsecondary needs of individuals with disabilities. In this paper we review and summarize the primary issues that have been addressed by diverse research groups over the past ten years.

Perspectives on Transition

Will (1983) suggested that transition should be "...a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the opportunities and risks of adult life (p. 2)." This very broad view of transition focused primarily on the movement from "school to work" with three "bridges" identified to represent the diverse paths students may take to attain employment (cf. Halpern, 1992). In support of this view, Rusch and Phelps (1987) argued that transition was an "...intermediate phase of the school-to-work continuum (p. 490)". Berkell and Gaylord-Ross (1989), and Wehman, Kregel and Barcus (1985) conceived of transition as a systematic process that ultimately led to employment. Halpern (1985) expanded "transition" to include nonvocational dimensions of adult adjustment, including residential living and social and interpersonal networks. According to Halpern (1985), the focus of transition should be on successful "community adjustment."

Additional perspectives on transition have emerged since 1985. For example, Blalock (1988) suggested that lifespan models that focus upon pre-adulthood, and early, middle, and

late adulthood should be used to "...investigate the impact of mental retardation on adult living and, conversely, the effects of the demands of adult life on adults with special needs (p. 18)." Rusch and Mithaug (1985) proposed a systems-analytic perspective to transition programming for persons with disabilities. This perspective was expanded upon by Hanley-Maxwell, Rusch, and Rappaport (1989) who suggested that transition services be viewed at different "levels," including the individual, small group, organizational, and community levels.

However, the conceptual model of transition that addressed both outcomes and processes, and included a broad range of adult experiences was initially proposed by Halpern (1985). The major elements of Halpern's model (1985) were included in the language of the 1991 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

In the next section we examine research activities conducted since 1984 to identify current issues in transition and suggest recommendations for future research and demonstration needs.

Transition-related Research

Research addressing transition may be organized into four categories, including: (a) follow-up and outcome studies tracking factors related to the adjustment of young adults who have exited from school; (b) studies focusing on the identification and analysis of "best-practices" in transition; (c) policy research addressing state and federal transition-related activities; and (d) analyses of applications for federally funded model demonstration projects. Each of these categories is discussed below.

Follow-Up and Outcome Studies

A review of the literature was conducted to identify follow-up and outcome studies of students who had graduated or exited school programs within a specified period. Table 1 lists 24 follow-up studies conducted since 1984 that are frequently cited in the literature. Table 1 indicates the number of individuals represented in each study, the years that

individuals included in the study exited school, the types of disabilities experienced by the individuals represented, and the state(s) in which individuals in the study resided.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 2 identifies pre-exit and post-exit adjustment factors that have been studied since 1984. Pre-exit factors include demographic, personal, or other types of information about a student while they were enrolled in school. Post-exit factors include variables that fall under the three components of Halpern's (1985) conceptual model of transition: employment, social-interpersonal, and residential. Additional factors examined by follow-up studies were classified under the rubrics of community-access and utilization, personal independence, post-secondary education and training, and a category entitled "other."

Insert Table 2 about here

Of primary interest are the small number of studies of critical outcome areas, including drop-out rates, parental involvement, transition planning services and curriculum content and instruction. Each of these issues are discussed below.

Special education drop-out rates. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 1990, 1991) reported the national event-based dropout rate for students during the 1988-89 school year to be about 4.5%. For the sake of comparison, Table 3 indicates the drop-out rates among students ages 14 and older with disabilities according to the Thirteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476) (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

Insert Table 3 about here

Overall, students with disabilities are at least twice as likely to drop out of school than most students. However, depending on the type and severity of disability (e.g., serious emotional

disturbance) some students with disabilities are over six times more likely to drop out of school than the total school-age population.

Also, the Thirteenth Annual Report to Congress noted that the drop-out rates reported by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) may be an undercount since dropouts are defined by OSEP as students who formally withdraw from school. Certainly, there are a number of students who do not return to school without formally withdrawing.

In spite of these grim statistics, the risks that students with disabilities face have not been clearly delineated. For example, it is well known that students who drop out of school earn significantly less than their graduating counterparts (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988). In addition, the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is reported to range from 50% to 80% (Kiernan & Bruininks, 1986; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1983).

Transition services have tremendous potential for addressing the needs of students with disabilities who are at risk of dropping out. Well designed and implemented transition services may have the potential of reducing the staggering drop-out rate among students with disabilities.

Parent and Student Involvement. Parental and student concerns, perceptions, and involvement also have received little attention in the follow-up literature. Only three of the studies represented in Table 1 addressed these issues (i.e., Edgar, 1987; Edgar, Levine, & Maddox, 1986; Haring & Lovett, 1990). None of the studies during this review measured or addressed the extent of student involvement in planning their exit from school. This seems inconsistent with numerous studies that have addressed the potential roles and responsibilities of parents and families of students with disabilities involved in transition (e.g., Anderson, 1987; Everson & Moon, 1987; Gillet, 1987; Wehman, Wood, Everson, Marchant, & Walker, 1987). For example, Brotherson, et al. (1988) assessed the needs identified by parents related to the transition of their children to adulthood. McNair and Rusch (1991) evaluated parents' expectations for their children after exiting school, their level of involvement in transition planning for their children, and the degree to which

parents were willing to be involved in such planning. Halpern (1992) suggested that the lack of parent participation and involvement may be detrimental to the achievement of successful transition outcomes.

Transition Planning Services. The types, quality, and degree of transition planning services also have received limited research attention. Only one study listed in Table 1 addressed this issue (National Longitudinal Transition Study). Fairweather (1989) reported that since the National Longitudinal Transition Study was initiated in 1987, transition programs were just beginning to develop. He reported that about 45% of the LEAs surveyed indicated that they had a transition program, and about 33% indicated that they employed a staff member whose main function was to assist students finding jobs. It is disconcerting that current follow-up studies seem to have avoided examining the relationship between transition processes and programs and the postsecondary outcomes achieved.

Curriculum and Instruction. Halpern (1992) recently identified another ongoing problem that has not been addressed by follow-up studies of exiting students. Specifically, he expressed concerns with determining what, how, and where to teach. According to Halpern (1992), curriculum content continues to focus too much on remedial academics and not enough on functional skill attainment. In addition, teaching methods do not focus on the critical issue of skill maintenance and generalization, full inclusion of student in regular classrooms, and the growing diversity of students in our schools.

Research on Best Practices in Transition

The transition literature is replete with discussions of the practices considered crucial for the development, implementation, and evaluation of effective transition services. For example, Rusch and DeStefano (1989) delineated 10 strategies for implementing effective transition services based on an analysis of over 200 model program applications for federal funding to improve education and employment programs throughout the United States.

In spite of the impressive array of services identified as being necessary for the successful transition of students with disabilities, the question remains as to which services are the

most critical. This issue has two components: (a) determining which services are the sine quo non to postsecondary community adjustment outcomes of adults with disabilities; and (b) identifying services that consistently yield quantitatively and qualitatively different outcomes.

Based on a review of transition literature, Kohler (1992) identified 12 follow-up studies that purported using "best- practices" in transition. These practices identified in a prior study by Kohler, DeStefano, Wermuth, Grayson, and McGinty (1992) included: (a) vocational training, (b) parent involvement, (c) interagency collaboration, (d) individualized plans/planning, (e) paid work experience, (f) social skills training, (g) community-based instruction, (h) community-referenced curriculum, (i) follow-up employment services, (j) integration, and (k) vocational assessment.

These practices were considered to be "substantiated" if a follow-up study provided empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of the practice for achieving specific post-school outcomes. In contrast, a practice was "implied" to be a "best" practice if the study provided no empirical evidence, but referred to the practice as necessary for achieving post-school outcomes.

Based on Kohler's (1992) results only 4 of the 11 practices were supported by empirical evidence: vocational training, parent involvement, paid work, and social skills training. Kohler's (1992) results also indicated that only three studies provided empirical evidence for the use of vocational training, only two for paid work, and only one study provided supporting evidence for parent involvement and social skills training. Clearly, follow-up studies have primarily focused on identifying outcomes achieved by exiting students with little attention paid to the relationship between transition practices and postsecondary outcomes.

Kohler (1992) also identified nine other recommended practices mentioned in articles that were categorized as theory or opinion-based articles. These practices were "implied" to be "best practices" since the articles under review reported no empirical evidence to

substantiate their effectiveness. They included: (a) interdisciplinary teaming, (b) employer input, (c) identification of specific transition outcomes, (d) inclusion of career goals and objectives in IEP, (e) career education curriculum, (f) daily living training, (g) academic skills training, (h) early transition planning, and (i) interagency agreements.

Finally, Kohler (1992) identified 19 studies that employed pseudo or quasi-experimental studies addressing best-practices in transition. All of the best-practices identified above were included. Of the 21 best-practices listed above (11 "best" and 9 "implied best") only 9 were substantiated with some empirical data (Kohler, 1992). In addition, of these nine practices, each practice was substantiated with empirical data by no more than two of the 19 pseudo or quasi-experimental studies reviewed.

Kohler, DeStefano, Wermuth, Grayson, and McGinty (1992) also identified methods employed to identify best practices and exemplary programs and determined which practices were consistently identified as effective. These authors identified 42 variables comprising the criteria for determining a program to be effective or exemplary. These variables were organized into seven categories including (a) evaluation findings, (b) program type and structure, (c) generalizability of findings, (d), philosophy, (e) support services, (f) personnel, and (g) program content. The variables included in the evaluation findings category were most frequently used as the basis for identifying effective and exemplary programs. Availability of information about program outcomes, program evaluation results, and cost-effectiveness data were most frequently cited (Kohler, et al., 1992). However, serious questions remain regarding the comparability of practices and outcomes; the extent to which practices were replicated and yielded specified outcomes; the extent that outcomes varied in kind and degree with respect to specific practices; and the extent that specific practices were more or less effective for generating specific outcomes.

The second most frequently cited variables for selecting exemplary programs fell in the program type and structure category. The most common related to program goals and objectives, organizational base, type of program, and innovativeness.

The work of Kohler (1992) and Kohler et al. (1992) suggest a need for more evidence to determine the relationship between what is accepted as "best practice" in transition and post-school outcomes.

Transition Policy Research

The need to analyze and evaluate federal and state policy in the field of developmental disabilities has been clearly articulated by numerous researchers (Boggs, 1987; Braddock, 1987a, 1987b; Braddock, Hemp, Fujiura, Bachelder, & Mitchell, 1990; Castellani, 1987; Turnbull, 1987). Turnbull (1987) made a cogent argument for the need to relate and connect policy analysis research to the "...principles and values underlying policy choices; the articulations of those principles and values in law as enacted by the legislatures, interpreted by the courts, and implemented by the executive agencies; and explications of the choices made by consumers, that is by people with disabilities, parents, and professionals" (p. 138).

Federal Policy Analysis. The most extensive analysis of federal transition policy to date has been conducted by DeStefano and Snauwert (1989). These authors employed a "value-critical" approach to analyze the interaction between special education and vocational rehabilitation at the federal level. The underlying premise of this analysis according to the authors was that "...there exists a value conflict between the two systems that jeopardizes the transition initiative" (p. 4).

The authors reviewed the legislative history of special education leading to transition to support their argument that the value underlying special education policy has been equality. They also presented support for the argument that, in spite of a recent shift in federal disability policy towards equality-based initiatives, efficiency continues to be the primary operating value.

Finally, DeStefano and Snauwert (1989) discussed policy implications for the transition movement. Noting that effective transition planning and services involve a strong collaborative effort between representatives in special education and vocational rehabilitation, the authors warned that "With respect to transition, the two systems are

converging into one policy and service delivery system. However, with the convergence the basic values of the two systems may be in conflict" (p. 63). Thus, while the underlying value of special education has been the notion that all children are morally entitled to a free and appropriate education, "...vocational rehabilitation has historically been viewed as a cost-reducing mechanism, as a way to reduce the public costs of income transfer to persons with disabilities" (DeStefano & Snauwert, 1989, p. 65).

The authors concluded with the identification of a major barrier to resolving this conflict. They observed that although legislation (e.g., P.L. 93-112, P.L. 99-506) increased services to persons with severe disabilities on the basis of equality, the actual implementation of the law has been driven by an emphasis on efficiency. Thus, due to insufficient appropriation of funds, the total number of individuals receiving services has actually decreased. Therefore, a large number of persons potentially or currently eligible for services are not receiving services. Backed by significant evidence, the authors provided a compelling argument that a federal policy driven by efficiency functions as a major barrier to the effective transition of students with disabilities.

State Policy Analysis. A second study conducted by Snauwert and DeStefano (1990) involved a comparative analysis of state transition planning based on transition policy statements from 41 states.

With respect to types of goal statements, the authors found a significant focus on employment and independent living goals as well as development and delivery of transition services. The analysis also attempted to identify states with (a) legislation focusing on transition; (b) interagency agreements without legislation; (c) neither legislation nor interagency agreements; (d) regulations, planning guides, and demonstration projects; (e) agencies created for the purpose of planning and coordinating state transition services; and (f) transition evaluation plans. Based on this investigation, DeStefano and Snauwert (1990) listed the following variables as potential barriers to effective transition: multi-agency involvement, consensus, policy specificity, resource allocation, and local influences.

It is crucial that the impact of the competition for finite resources be fully evaluated as it pertains to transition of individuals with disabilities. Thus, it might be helpful to examine both national and state values on two levels. The first involves the basic values that predicate competing policy priorities similar to the analysis conducted by DeStefano and Snauwert (1989). Second, the extent of public awareness and commitment to national and state priorities must be examined.

Competition analysis. An ongoing research activity of the Transition Research Institute at Illinois has involved an analysis of federally-funded demonstration projects to assess the impact of national transition efforts. This analysis employs a multi-level model of analysis proposed by Rusch and Mithaug (1985) and later elaborated by Rusch and Phelps (1987) and Hanley-Maxwell et al. (1989). This model involves identifying and examining variables and outcomes at four levels including the individual and their family, the program, the organization, and the community. Applications submitted by projects funded through a number of OSERS competitions related to transition and employment were analyzed with respect to these four levels. Particular attention was paid to (a) demographic characteristics of funded projects; (b) involvement of cooperating agencies; (c) the congruence between OSERS goals stated in the request for applications and the goals and purposes cited in applications submitted by funded projects; (d) project activities; (e) project outcomes; and (f) barriers to achieving state goals cited in final reports.

Secondary education and transitional services for handicapped youth. The first study involved an analysis of 11 model demonstration projects funded under competition 84.158B, Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Handicapped Youth (McGee, 1990). Projects were more frequently involved with state education (n=7) and vocational rehabilitation agencies (n=7) followed by mental health (n=4), and local education agencies (n=3). Other types of cooperative ventures involved cooperatively with businesses, community colleges, labor unions, projects with industry, information centers, and developmental disabilities councils. Despite general congruence between OSERS

expectations and purposes cited in project applications, McGee (1990) found that project applications described a larger number of goals than those originally called for by OSERS. The majority of purposes focused at the student/family, program, and organization levels, whereas none were cited at the community level. Results also indicated that projects focused on activities related to identification and needs assessment at the individual level, continued implementation of proposed activities at the program level, interagency cooperation at the organization level, and outreach at the community level. Projects also focused on placement, knowledge of target needs and services, and development of a transition cooperative at the individual, program, and organization levels of analysis, respectively. No outcomes were cited at the community level of analysis.

Barriers to achieving program goals included (a) exiting from school without sufficient or clear goals, (b) lack of pre-service or in-service training, (c) lack of cooperative management and sufficient resources, and (d) lack of employer awareness at the individual, program, organization, and community levels, respectively.

Research in education of the handicapped program. Rubin (1991) analyzed 12 employment demonstration projects for youth funded by OSERS under competition 84-023D, Research in Education of the Handicapped Program. Employing the same methods of analysis as McGee (1991), Rubin (1991) also explored the same areas of interest.

In this study, projects had developed cooperative relationships more frequently with local education agencies (n=8) followed by vocational rehabilitation agencies (n=5), state education agencies (n=4), businesses (n=4), nonprofit organizations (n=3) and organizations categorized as "other" (n=2). Only one project listed a cooperative relationship with a mental health and developmental disabilities agency.

Purposes and goals were consistent with OSERS purposes; however, more purposes were actually cited in project applications than originally called for by OSERS. Purposes were identified at each level of analysis and similar to McGee's (1990) findings they were

more specific than OSERS purposes. Activities and outcomes were also cited by projects at all levels of analysis.

Barriers to achieving project goals identified by Rubin (1991) included student attrition and lack of parent collaboration at the individual level, lack of available staff support at the program level, lack of available residential services and collaboration among service providers at the organization level, and lack of transportation resources at the community level.

Transition from school to work/postsecondary education. Rusch, Kohler, and Hughes (1992) analyzed five competitions focusing on transition from school to work or postsecondary education using the procedures outlined above.

Only one application submitted for these competitions cited a purpose addressing community-level issues. Most focused on one or two specific levels and not on potential interactions and impact across more than two levels. In addition, twice as many purposes were cited by the 64 projects funded through these competitions than were called for by OSERS announcements.

Rusch et al. (1992) also examined barriers to the attainment of project goals. For educational projects, barriers related to individuals involved in the delivery of services with the exception of students. For employment-related projects, barriers tended to involve the student and/or family level, where family resistance was viewed as a significant barrier to goal attainment. Personnel issues and lack of collaboration also were considered significant barriers to program effectiveness at the program and organizational levels.

Finally, there was little, if any, emphasis on examining variables and impact of services at the organizational and community levels, otherwise recommended by Rusch and Phelps (1987). This is in strong contrast to the finding that the vast majority of postschool and postsecondary outcomes and variables identified in the literature are directly or indirectly related to participation in the community.

Summary

This paper involved a review of transition research conducted over the past decade. A review of the conceptual basis and different models of transition indicated that transition is now viewed as a process for ensuring the success of students with disabilities exiting schools. It was argued that Halpern's (1985) model of transition has withstood the test of time.

It was also noted that the majority of factors included in follow-up studies, another research area were included in the components identified by Halpern's (1985) model. However, follow-up studies suffer from such problems as failure to address critical outcome areas such as students with disabilities at risk of dropping out, parent involvement, the types and quality of transition services provided, and the impact of curricula and instruction.

In terms of best practices in transition, it was observed that little empirical evidence exists to support relationships between identified best-practices and post-school outcomes.

In the context of transition-policy research, it was recommended that future studies analyze the extent to which national priorities for particular areas induce inequities in others, the extent of public support for particular priorities, and the extent to which equity achieved is a function of capacity.

Findings from competition analysis research were also reviewed. Barriers to successful transition were identified. Recommendations focused on addressing the involvement of diverse constituencies from the community in transition planning and implementation efforts. Table 5 includes a complete listing of recommendations based on a review of research efforts and findings presented in this paper. A number of these recommendations were solicited from the field by the Transition Research Institute at Illinois from two sources. The first source included participants of round table discussions conducted during the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Transition Research Institute.

Roundtable discussion focused on the needs and concerns of participants involved in projects related to (a) self-determination and family networking, (b) identification and assessment of employment training for persons with mild disabilities, (c) identification and assessment of employment training for persons with severe disabilities, (d) postsecondary academic preparation leading to employment, and (e) postsecondary training leading to employment.

The second source of field generated concerns and recommendations originated from members of the Transition Research Institute Advisory Board. Letters were mailed to each member of the advisory board requesting each member to identify major areas of concern and submit specific recommendations for future research and demonstration activities.

Insert Table 4 about here

Efforts must continue in the areas addressed by this paper. In addition, research efforts must be expanded to address problematic issues that affect the impact of transition planning services and the postsecondary outcomes of students with disabilities.

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Table 1

24 Follow-up Studies Conducted Since 1984

FOLLOW-UP STUDIES	N	EXIT YEARS	DISABILITY CHARACTERISTICS	STATE
deBettencourt, L.U., Zigmond, N. & Thorton, H. (1989)	97	1980-1982	LD	VA
Edgar, E. (1987)	1,292	1976-1985	all disabilities	WA
Edgar, E. & Levin, P. (1986)	1,292	1976-1985	all disabilities	WA
Fairweather, J.S. & Shaver, D.M. (1991)	1,242	1985-1986	all disabilities	U.S.
Fardig, D.B. Algozzine, R.F., Schwartz, S.E., Hensel, J.W. & Westling, D.L. (1985)	113	unreported	mild handicaps	FL
Frank, A.R., Sitlington, P.L., Cooper, L. & Cool, V. (1990)	348	1984-1985	MR - unspecified	IA
Haring, K. & Lovett, D. (1990)	58	1983-1985	MMSP - MR	unreported
Haring, K., Lovett, D. & Smith, D.D. (1990)	64	1983-1985	LD	unreported
Hasazi, S.B., Gordon, L.R. & Roe, C.A. (1985)	462	1979-1983	unreported	VT
Hasazi, S.B., Gordon, L.R., Roe, C.A., Finck, K., Hull, M. & Salembier, G. (1985)	243	1981-1983	TMR, EMR	VT
Kranstover, L.L., Thurlow, M.L. & Bruininks, R.H. (1989)	239	1977-1984	LD, EMR, ED, SI	MN
Kregel, J., Wehman, P., Seyfarth, J. & Marshall, K. (1986)	300	1978-1983	MMSP - MR	VA
Levin, E., Zigmond, N. & Birch, J. (1985)	34	1977-1982	LD	PA
Liebert, D., Lutsky, L. & Gottlieb, A. (1990)	106	1967-1984	severe PD	NY
Linden, B.E. & Forness, S.R. (1986)	40	1970-1975	borderline, mild MR w/psyciatric diagnosis	CA
Mithaug, D.E., Horiuchi, C.R. & Fanning, P.R. (1985)	234	1978-1979	MR, percep/comm, E/BD, PD	CO
Neel, R., Meadows, N., Levine, P. & Edgar, E. (1988)	160	1978-1986	BD	WA
Roessler, R.T., Brolin, D.E. & Johnson, J.M. (1990)	59	1987-1988	mild MR, LD	AK, MN, CA
Schalock, R.L., Wolzen, B., Ross, I., Elliott, B., Werbel, G. & Peterson, K. (1986)	108	1979-1983	LD, EMH, MR	NE
Scuccimarra, D.J. & Speece, D.L. (1990)	65	1983-1989	LD, MR, EI, PD	Wash. DC
Valdes, K.A., Williamson, C.L. & Wagner, M.M. (1990)	8,700	1985-1986	all disabilities	U.S.
Wagner, M.M. (1989)	8,700	1985-1986	all disabilities	U.S.
Wehman, P., Kregel, J. & Seyfarth, J. (1985)	117	1978-1983	MMSP - MR	VA
Zigmond, N. & Thorton, H. (1985)	58	1978-1984	LD	PA

Note: Several references above involved the same sample and study.

BD - behavior disorder
E/BD - emotional/behavior disorder
ED - emotional disability
EI - emotional impairment
EMH - educable mentally handicapped
EMR - educable mentally retarded
LD - learning disability
MMSP - mild, moderate, severe, profound
MR - mental retardation
PD - physical disability
SI - sensory impairment
TMR - trainable mentally retarded

Table 2

A Partial Listing of Community Adjustment Factors Derived From Follow-up Studies Published Since 1984 of Students with Disabilities Exiting School

PRE-EXIT ADJUSTMENT FACTORS

1. Demographic and personal information
2. School program exited from
3. Manner of exit from school
4. Type of high school vocational and work experience
5. Impact of high school vocational and work experience
6. Math and reading scores
7. Drop-out factors

POST-EXIT ADJUSTMENT FACTORS

Employment

8. Current employment status
9. Unemployment rate
10. Type of job
11. Means of finding job
12. Duration of employment
13. Employment history
14. Hours worked
15. Wages earned
16. Fringe benefits provided
17. Individual job satisfaction
18. Employer satisfaction

Social-Interpersonal

19. Marital status
20. Number of children
21. Frequency of social contacts
22. Type of social contacts
23. Range of social contacts
24. Social events attended
25. Membership in social organizations and clubs
26. Number of friendships
27. Leisure and recreation activities
28. Legal difficulties
29. Relationships with families

Residential

30. Current living arrangements
31. Home management

Community-Access & Utilization

32. Utilization of social and rehabilitation services
33. Mobility

Personal Independence

34. Income transfer payments
35. Basic self care
36. Use of money

Postsecondary Education and Training

37. Type of education and training
38. Number of years of education or training
39. Degrees/certificates earned
40. Impact for employment

Other

41. Parent concerns
42. Basic self care
43. Use of money
44. Personal satisfaction with current situation

Table 3

National Dropout Rates for Students with Disabilities Ages 14 and Older During the 1988-89 School Year (U.S. Department of Education, 1991)

TYPE OF DISABILITY	DROPOUT RATE
Serious Emotional Disturbance	39.1
Deaf-Blind	27.4
Specific Learning Disability	26.8
Mental Retardation	24.8
Other Health Impairment	17.9
Speech and Language Impairment	17.0
Visual Impairment	16.8
Multiple Disabilities	16.0
Orthopedic Impairment	12.2
Hearing Impairment	11.2
ALL DISABILITIES	26.7

Table 4

Areas of Concern and Recommendations for Future Research and Demonstration in Transition

AREA OF CONCERN	RECOMMENDATIONS
Drop-Out Prevention	♦ Identify the postschool risks for students with disabilities who drop out. ♦ Identify, develop, implement and evaluate transition services that reconnect students who drop out with appropriate services. ♦ Identify, implement, and evaluate transition services designed to be implemented for students identified as at risk of dropping out as a component of drop out prevention services. ♦ Identify and evaluate the impact of effective drop out prevention services. ♦ Identify barriers for reconnecting students to school service who drop out.
Student and Parent Involvement	♦ Assess the extent and impact of student and parent participation and involvement in the transition process. ♦ Address risks and outcomes associated with the lack of student and parent participation and involvement in transition planning. ♦ Investing post-school outcomes as a function of the degree of student and parent participation and involvement in transition planning.
Transition Planning	♦ Evaluate the effectiveness and quality of transition planning services in terms of expected and achieved post-school outcomes.
Curriculum and Instruction	♦ Disseminate information regarding curriculum and instructional materials, methods, tools, and practices with supporting evidence of effectiveness. ♦ Identify, evaluate and disseminate information involving scientifically rigorous studies investigating the impact and efficacy of traditional and contemporary curricular and instructional practices, methods, and tools. ♦ Promote the study and evaluation by local schools and districts of curricular and instructional methods and tools prior to full adoption or endorsement. ♦ Require substantive evidence supporting the efficacy of curriculum and instructional materials developed and marketed by educational publishers.
Best Practices	♦ Delineate transition outcomes that are referenced to local communities and demographic factors.
Transition Policy	♦ Examine values that result in our nation decreasing its support for education and rehabilitation. ♦ Study mechanisms that promote priority assignment of resources to education and rehabilitation. ♦ Assess the extent that legislative and regulatory requirements are in conflict, the values underlying these requirements, and the impact of this conflict.
Future Research and Demonstration	♦ Initiate efforts to define, develop, and evaluate greater community involvement in the successful transition of students and adults with disabilities. ♦ Identify, develop, implement, and evaluate the delivery of transition services for all students at risk of failure and/or dropping out. ♦ Initiate efforts to determine the efficacy of including transition services as a component of drop out prevention services. ♦ Promote the evaluation of transition research and demonstration efforts and outcomes on multiple levels with a particular focus at the organization and community levels.

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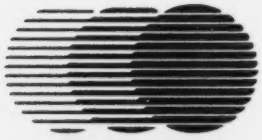
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